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INDO-BRITISH UNION?

RESPONSIBLE newspapers in the United States have been quicker than the British press to understand the significance of the Indian mutiny. The New York *Herald-Tribune*, for instance, says that "whatever may be the immediate reason for the riots in Bombay and elsewhere in India, the causes are to be found in the political, economic and social revolutions which are under way, not only in that country but throughout the Orient. In most of the lands of Asia, men with brown or yellow faces are striving to free themselves from the domination of white men." The same national and colour consciousness is revealed in the anti-British riots in Egypt, and it is a factor in the anti-Soviet demonstrations in Chungking. We are witnessing another stage in an inevitable process. In India we have reached the climax.

The British are not in a position to assert their old domination, nor does the British Government or British people desire to do so. Aircraft and tanks can "restore order," but to hold India under alien rule is no longer physically or morally possible. The mutiny in the Indian Navy was a sequel to demonstrations by American soldiers and "strikes" on a large scale in the R.A.F. At least one Indian unit refused to fire on rioters, and once part of the Indian Army is impregnated with the nationalist idea, it ceases to be an instrument which can be used to fight for the British Raj. Nor have we any right to expect it to do so. We can no longer plead the Japanese menace, and we have learnt that in India, as elsewhere in the Orient, the early victories of Japan were regarded as steps towards the end of Western Imperialism. Indians recall that they were brought into this war, in which so many brave Hindus and Moslems have lost their lives, without any consultation, by the arbitrary action of the Parliament in Westminster. In 1939 the Congress offer to aid Britain in the war on terms was disdainfully neglected. The failure of the Cripps mission and the outbreak of violence against Britain in 1942 left a further legacy of anger and distrust. Recently grievances have mounted. Indian officers bitterly complain that, both in pay and promotion, they are treated on an inferior footing to white officers. The trial of leaders of the Indian National Army, which is generally regarded in India as having fought loyally for India, not as being disloyal to Britain, has fomented national feeling among Moslems and Hindus alike. The mood of incipient revolt, exacerbated by famine, is described by Mr. H. N. Brailsford this week in an article written before the mutiny. The greatest obstacle to peace-making is the almost universal scepticism in India about the sincerity of Britain's promises.

Facing these facts we yet say that this moment is uniquely favourable for a constructive solution. On the British side the three Cabinet Ministers who are to proceed to India know that this is our last chance to reach a settlement of a kind that leaves Britain with any of its assets, whether they be reckoned in terms of property, trade or good-will. Congress leaders, on their side, have made it equally clear that they are as anxious to avoid bloodshed as the British themselves. Gandhi is appealing for non-violence and Patel, the powerful party organiser, has united with him in calling upon mutineers to return to duty. The speeches of Nehru reflect the excited mood of his audiences, but Nehru also belongs to the older and responsible generation which, however bitterly they feel or speak, still desperately desire peace and friendship with Britain. Behind these leaders there are countless thousands whose nationalism is not of a kind that fears violence or reckons its cost. For that very reason, provided the British no longer burke the issue of "independence," the chances of settlement are fair.

Congress long ago gave up talking about Dominion Status; for many years its outspoken demand has been for independence. If that is granted, an Indo–British Union may be created, in which Britain and India share in a common system of defence and benefit by closer commercial relations. A Treaty on these lines may be the beginning of a far happier and more prosperous period for both countries.

Britain must not again make proposals that are too little or too late. We must not again attempt to make self-government depend on a prior agreement between Hindus and Moslems, or allow treaties with the Princes to stand in the way. It may be that the British Ministers can aid Indians to reach a communal settlement through some form of Pakistan acceptable to Jinnah and Congress. It is certain that if our intention to pass over power to an independent Indian government is immediately clear, most of the Princes will hasten to come to terms with Indian democracy. Some of them are already doing so. But the essential is for the Cabinet Ministers to state unequivocally that, on a date named (say, in a year's time), the British will in any case hand over power to an Indian government. Only on that basis can they hope to work out with Indian leaders the terms of an Anglo-Indian Union in which India's equal status is beyond doubt and the interests of both countries fostered to their mutual benefit.

The Wheat Mystery

Every day brings graver news of the world food shortage. Indications are that the prospective wheat deficit of five million tons may be an under-estimate. For India alone at least 2½ million tons of grain and rice will be needed to preserve rations at the barest subsistence level. Reports from the British Zone of Germany speak of the rapid exhaustion of potato stocks. Civilian rations have now been cut by one-third, and further reduction is threatened unless more wheat is imported before April. In his speech to Parliament on February 14th, Sir Ben Smith made an extremely misleading statement in relation to the problem of allocating the world's scanty wheat supplies. The Combined Food Board in Washington, he said, "is an international machinery for planning the allocation of all the

main foods among the nations of the world." What he did not reveal is that in mid-1945, when a rashly optimistic view appears to have been taken both of future crops and the size of exportable stocks, a decision was taken to remove wheat and flour from allocation by the Combined Board. Nor did he tell Parliament that, on February 7th, the Director-General of Unrra delivered to the Secretary-General of Uno an urgent message from Unrra's Council on Supplies urging that wheat should be restored to the control of the Combined Food Board, and emphasising the extent to which contracts between individual exporting and importing countries, including forward sales, are now interfering with the equitable distribution of wheat and flour. Sir Ben Smith's confused replies to Parliamentary questions on Wednesday do not explain why control by the Combined Board was abandoned, and it left the impression that, at a time when the world is threatened by famine, no effective control of wheat exists at all.

How to Oppose Franco?

The execution of ten Republicans who entered Spain after fighting with the French Resistance, has inspired a fresh wave of protests against Franco. Following the demand of the French Assembly for a diplomatic rupture with Franco, French communication workers staged a twenty-four hour token stoppage of traffic with Spain, and the French Cabinet has decided to close the Spanish frontier. The External Affairs group of the Parliamentary Labour Party—which has discussed relations with Spain on three previous occasions—on Monday passed a resolution calling upon the Government to break off diplomatic relations with Franco. In this line it is backed by the T.U.C. At the same time, the Caudillo appears to have shelved his negotiations with Don Juan, on whose success the British Government may have counted, and to believe that he can still survive by capitalising the differences of policy between the democratic countries. Now the French Cabinet has made a new approach to London, serious discussions should be instituted at once instead of allowing the proposal to lapse as previously. An American Note is said to advocate a "caretaker" Government for Spain. What could this be? With all its defects, the exiled Spanish Government represents the basis for an alternative to Franco. If steps are taken to improve and support it, the opposition to Franco, now active in Spain, will be greatly encouraged. Though the withdrawal of ambassadors, or their recall on indefinite furlough, on the American model, is only a gesture, that, too, might have a useful psychological effect in Spain.

Deadlock Over Italy

Chances that the Peace Conference will meet in Paris, as scheduled, on May 1st, seem to be rapidly receding. The Foreign Ministers' deputies seem to have reached virtually complete deadlock on the first of their tasks, the drafting of peace terms for Italy. The gulf between the Russian and Anglo-American standpoints has so far proved unbridgeable. In the first place, there is the question of the directive to be given to the Four-Power Commission, which, it had been agreed, should go to Venezia Giulia and Trieste to report on a frontier which would leave as few national minorities as possible on the wrong side of it. The British and the Americans are apparently insistent that this Commission should review the whole of Venezia Giulia, including the districts where a *de facto* Yugoslav administration has been established. The Russian thesis is that the districts which Marshal Tito's forces have occupied are *choses jugées*, and that the work of the Commission should be confined to considering only the immediate area of Trieste. This clash of views, however, appears to be only one symptom of universal disagreement, which extends equally to the application of the mandate principle to Italy's former African colonies. Meanwhile, the results of Allied disagreement are disastrous for Italy's economy. So long as the question of reparations is unsettled, Italy's foreign trade is practically at a standstill; and the port of Trieste, whose only rational future would be to serve as an outlet for the products of central Europe, is condemned to inanition by the severance of the Continent into sharply divided Russian and Anglo-American Zones. Moreover, while Italy is anxious to be rid of the burden of an Allied Army of Occupation in Venezia Giulia, there is widespread fear in Italy that the withdrawal of Allied Forces might lead to annexation by Yugoslavia of the whole of the debated territories up to the line of the River Isonzo.

The Poles in Exile

It is satisfactory to learn that the Foreign Office has received from the Polish Government in Warsaw assurances of good treatment for all Polish soldiers who elect to return to Poland. They are promised full citizens' rights and aid in resettlement, including grants of land for those who want them. The British authorities are printing 200,000 copies of a statement embodying these assurances for circulation among Polish troops. The effect should be salutary among the ranks of General Anders' army, provided steps are taken at the same time to put a stop to the inflammatory "anti-Warsaw" propaganda which the General and his senior officers are bringing to bear on their men. As things are, the *Gazeta Zolnierza* and the *Orzel Bialy*—soldiers' newspapers published by the Second Polish Corps and financed by the British Treasury—continue to proclaim that the London emigrés are the only lawful government of Poland; that no promises from Warsaw merit reliance, and that "the power contained in our guns and tanks is a symbol of what still awaits us." A condition precedent to securing freedom of choice for the Polish troops in Italy would seem to be the early disbandment of the staff of the Second Polish Corps and of General Anders' headquarters at Bari. Until now every effort has been made by the officers of General Anders' army to frighten and dissuade their men from returning to Poland. How many will really prefer not to return under the changed circumstances, nobody can say. A considerable number will certainly reject all suasion to return to Poland. A point which should be borne in mind is that, though Mr. Bevin proclaims his refusal "to throw to the wolves" men who have fought gallantly for the Allies, General Anders' army has nearly doubled in strength since the Armistice; that less than a quarter of its members were ever in action on the Allied side; and that most of the rest were recruited from prisoners-of-war captured fighting in the German Army, including not a few who came from the Waffen S.S. The eventual disposal of men, Fascists or democrats, who refuse to return to Poland or whom the Polish Government would not admit there, is an Anglo-American responsibility. What is certain is that their continued presence in Italy, under arms, is much too dangerous.

Housing and Coal

So far as construction of new houses is concerned, it was not to be expected that Mr. Bevan's first progress report would make an impressive showing. Winter is practically a closed season for building; and, in the period up to January 31st, nearly half the available labour force was engaged in war-damage repairs. These added 70,000 to the number of habitable dwellings, besides restoring reasonable comfort in over 400,000 houses damaged but still occupied. The progress report will be scrutinised particularly for evidence about prospects during the coming summer. In this respect indications are in some ways encouraging. For temporary houses, 67,000 sites have been completed, and enough sites are available for the whole temporary programme. For permanent houses, local authorities have now acquired 417,000 sites and completed the development of 52,000; tenders for 45,000 houses have been approved, and 17,000 are in course of erection. Spring will presumably see a big switch-over of labour from repairs to new construction. The real question is whether the aggregate labour force in sight is sufficient. At the end of last July, 348,000 operatives were actually engaged in housing work. By the end of January, the figure had risen to only 435,000. There is still enormous leeway to be made up before Mr. Bevan's programme can get into full swing. Moreover, can we be certain that output of components and materials such as bricks and cement will be stepped up in time to permit of a really impressive building performance next summer, during whose course demobilisation will add scores of thousands to the numbers in search of homes? The answer depends in part on the adequacy of British coal output. Though coal production has again improved, Mr. Shinwell is faced with the fact that in this country, as in Holland and Belgium, the miners need further incentives to greater effort. Possibilities are increased rations, or special supplies of scarce commodities in mining areas, or readjustment of wages—say, six shifts' pay for a completed week of five shifts.

Man-power—Latest Version

Some further light has now been thrown on the Government's intentions about the rate of reduction in the size of the armed forces during the latter part of this year. The intention appears to be that the total shall be brought down to 1,100,000, *plus* 100,000 in training, by the end of 1946. This is a good deal better than some of the forecasts previously made; but it is still a long way above the quantity of man-power that can be spared from the urgent tasks of production, or supplied except by a compulsion which the people will hardly accept. The long-run maximum for the whole of the armed forces can hardly be put higher than 750,000 at most, even on the assumption of a year's compulsory service and of voluntary recruitment as high as before the war, when unemployment was still the most effective recruiting-sergeant. This total of 750,000 includes men in training. Nor is it a figure to be approached gradually over a long period. The desire of those who have served to get out of the Forces is strong; and the need for more workers in industry and in home services is tremendously urgent. No doubt the figure of 1,200,000 may appear moderate to Service chiefs approaching the problem from the angle of British commitments, and wishing for an ample reserve in case of emergency. For statesmen, totals arrived at on this principle cannot be acceptable. If that is what our commitments add up to—well, we must limit our commitments to what we can do and afford, particularly as troops abroad are the heaviest consumers of our scanty dollar reserves.

The Shape of the Budget

With the publication, last week-end, of the civil estimates, as well as those for the Defence Services, it is possible to forecast with fair accuracy the expenditure side of Mr. Dalton's Budget for 1946–47. Civil supply will cost £2,247 millions and total Defence expenditure (including, of course, a considerable non-recurring sum for gratuities and the winding-up of war contracts) will be £1,193 millions. Allowing £500 millions for the service of the National Debt, and a minimum of £60 millions for oddments, Budget outgoings, in round figures, will be £4,000 millions. The question is how large a proportion of this sum the Chancellor will cover by borrowing. It can hardly be less than £1,000 millions; and, if Mr. Dalton is going to restore pre-war income tax allowances in full, the deficit between income and expenditure may be even larger. Clearly the pump is going to be primed all right.

PARLIAMENT: Palestinians and Zionists

Wednesday.

THE Palestine debate without the Zionist Janner—who wasn't "called"—and without the anti-Zionist Stokes—who was abroad—was like Hamlet without Rosenkrantz and Guildenstern. That is to say, it got along very nicely, despite the absence of the stock characters. Mr. Speaker's production of the drama, condensed under Morrison's direction into less than four hours, nicely balanced Jewish and pro-Arab speeches, with the fulcrum of a pro-Jewish interpellation by Teeling of Brighton, who thought that the Jews in Palestine would serve British strategy better than the Arabs.

Jewish members like Squadron Leader Segal and Colonel Henry Morris stated the case for more Jewish immigration with the far better arguments that Palestine is for the suffering Jews of Europe a haven, a symbol of freedom and an aspiration; humanity, not expediency, should guide Britain's policy. Lipson, another Jew, thought that the Jews in Europe should stay where they are, until their countries—Germany, Poland, Rumania and so on—tolerated them, or rather, embraced them as Britain, Russia and America did their Jews. Colonel Morris regarded this as shamefully smug indifference, and said "without the smallest intention of being offensive" that Lipson's father, had he heard his son's speech, would have turned in his grave.

Two anti-Zionist speeches, one from the Labour side, the other from the Tory Major Legge-Bourke, were a further step in the continuing disclosure of new Parliamentary "characters." Reid, a retired Colonial Civil Servant, gave, in a maiden speech, an encyclopædic history of Palestine, in order to disprove the Jews' title to the country. Whatever the validity of his case, his prolix style, of which Polonius would have disapproved, did not further it. Major Legge-Bourke said that we should "beware of pity" and not encourage more Jews to go to Palestine. Why? Because if we forced them on the Arabs we would be compelled, logically, to accept some more ourselves. The Major, a young man with a military-parsonic manner, shrank from such consequences. But, on the whole, the debate was dignified, sympathetic, and, like Oliver Stanley's speech, just in its recognition of both Jewish and Arab problems.

Unexpectedly Lord Winterton, an anti-Zionist, didn't take part in this debate. He was saving himself for agriculture. Once again he took part in a Parliamentary row, which is such an unbecoming example for young members, when Percy Collick, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture, was winding up. The Chief Whip moved the closure. Winterton resented it; he wanted his questions answered; he complained and complained until the Question could not be put, and the motion was "talked out." The Noble Lord, like De la Bère, that other expert in the art of *brouhaha*, adds more to the entertainment of the House than he does to its instruction.

With each sitting their successors and competitors take their claims for attention. Sir Gifford Fox, deploying his corporation, clearing his throat, before asking a question about the police. In affected innocence, Sir Thomas Moore, whose voice is the second most beautiful voice in the House, asking a derogatory supplementary on paper rationing; Keeling, most fastidulate of Tories, asking about Japanese bonds; the Socialist Peter Freeman "wanting to know" about Newport or vivisection; and William Shepherd asking about anything, adding a rude supplementary, and sinking back with a self-approval which even his friends can hardly share.

In the Committee Stage of the Trades Disputes Bill the lawyers for the most part took over from the "characters." J. S. C. Reid, a leading Scottish advocate, and Sir John Anderson were clear but unconvincing in their support of the Tory amendments; Pritt silenced a member opposite who was interrupting him while he was interrupting Anderson with a "Shut up, you fool!" and Sir Thomas Moore, when a vote was to be taken, sat with his hat on, moving a point of order, and shouting at the top of his voice that he was gagged by the Government.

PHINEAS MINOR

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THE B.B.C. AND ITS CHARTER

THE Prime Minister's announcement last week that, though Parliament would have a chance of debating the B.B.C.'s new Charter, there would be no public inquiry into the organisation and control of the B.B.C., is disappointing. It is to be presumed that the Government has definitely decided that broadcasting in this country is to remain the monopoly of a Public Board, and has set its face firmly against the introduction of sponsored programmes run by commercial networks. This being so, the Cabinet probably felt there would be no advantage in having an inquiry at which this debatable question was bound to be discussed at length. The question, however, of commercial broadcasting is by no means the only one involved. There is the important issue whether those responsible for the direction of the B.B.C. should not be answerable to a Minister, instead of there being, as at present, a Board of Governors sheltered by a Royal Charter and enjoying a degree of autonomy which might be used to frustrate the very purposes of democracy. There is, too, the question whether the B.B.C., if it continues as a "protected" monopoly, will show sufficient enterprise to keep pace with scientific progress. Will it take full advantage of recent technical developments which make it possible for listeners to get much better value for their now increased licence fee?

One (now neglected) function of broadcasting is to provide a sounding board for local activity of every kind and a platform for local educational and cultural services. Indeed, unless there are such local services, it is practically impossible to rid broadcasting of its greatest danger—the passivity of the listener. Side by side with switching a knob, and getting the best public information and cultural service professionals can provide, there must be participation of non-professionals in the same medium. It is obvious that this function cannot be performed at all by an organisation centralised in London. What is needed is the provision of a number of small stations designed to serve areas between twenty and thirty miles in radius. But this question cannot be discussed seriously unless the technical reason for the present B.B.C. monopoly is fully understood. Briefly, the reason is that the wavelengths at present used for broadcasting in this country are strictly limited. These wavelengths are the medium and long wavelengths, and the number of these available for broadcasting in the whole of Europe is only about two hundred. Obviously, therefore, the idea of local broadcasting of the sort suggested above cannot be entertained within these technical limitations.

Is there any other solution to this technical problem of wavelength shortage? There is, and it consists of using the ultra short wavelengths (at present used for television) of which the number is, for practical purposes, unlimited. Broadcasting on the ultra short wave-lengths local transmitters could be used whose radius is the horizon (usually about thirty miles or so). By planning of stations it would be possible in time to give listeners in every part of the country twenty alternative programmes and a television service. This solution has already been worked out in detail. In November of 1943, a detailed plan was read before the Institute of Electrical Engineers by two of Cossor's chief engineers. The scheme was based on the use of a system of transmission known as Frequency Modulation, as opposed to the present system of Amplitude Modulation. As far as the use of the ultra short wave-lengths are concerned, both modulation systems can be used; much technical controversy about the relative merits of the two is going on, but it would seem that F.M. has the most advantages, and it is being greatly developed in the U.S.A. What is important as far as the considerations of this article are concerned is that, since the new television service has to be carried on the ultra short waves, it would obviously be desirable to develop sound broadcasting on these wave-lengths simultaneously. The cost of such stations is estimated at between £2,000 and £2,500. New receiving sets would have to be manufactured, but there does not seem any technical obstacle to mass production of suitable sets within a reasonable time.

In view of all this, the silence about these technical developments, a silence maintained by the Government, the B.B.C. and the radio industry (with the exception of Cossors), is most extraordinary.

It is obvious that, with such possibilities, much of the discussion going on about the future of British broadcasting is out of date and irrelevant. Discussion should be centred, first of all on ways and means of improving the national and regional services in the immediate future, and, secondly, on ways and means of using the new technical developments to the best advantage of local democracy. Plans should be worked out now for an orderly development of local radio stations and the mass production of suitable sets as and when the stations come into operation.

It must be assumed that a Labour Government would be unlikely to give the control of such stations to anyone other than local authorities or public bodies such as the Universities. The content of these local broadcasts should obviously be fully representative of local interests and designed to stimulate new ones. Local politics would be discussed in great detail; trade union branches, co-operatives and such organisations would be given time to report their activities; education both for children and adults would get its fair share of suitable time; cultural bodies of all sorts, music clubs, dramatic societies and so on, would take part in building programmes. The work of the Arts Council, for instance, could be supplemented in such ways as giving talks as "curtain raisers" to the concerts, art exhibitions, etc., it is giving in various parts of the country. "Hook up" programmes between districts tackling the same problems could be arranged; Plymouth and Coventry could hold a joint "town meeting of the air" on their reconstruction plans. A Minister visiting a certain area could be asked to explain how his policy affected it and answer questions put to him by local people. Local residents having the chance to go abroad would give an account of their experiences on their return; any visitor of interest from abroad could tell people about his country. M.P.s could give regular accounts of Parliamentary happenings.

It may be objected that there are not enough people with the right talents to staff such stations and to produce a level of programmes above trifling mediocrity. Technical staff, however, can easily be trained: and, as for the programmes, it is surely clear that the present system presents too few opportunities for the development of talent. Local stations would not attempt to compete with the national service. For a beginning, three or four areas, probably based on University cities, could be selected for an experiment. The stations might be on the air only for three or four hours each day. During the war, the American Forces Network maintained a number of low-powered transmitters in this country which carried a national service most of the day, with breaks for local programmes. These local programmes were often valued by British residents in the area. A similar network of British stations would have a much greater appeal, especially if, refusing all temptation to produce inferior imitations of B.B.C. programmes, they retained their local character.

It does not need any very great imagination to foresee what a flowering of local enterprise such a broadcasting service could bring about. By means of this new technique the Athenian conception of democracy could be made a modern reality; there would be a platform available to anyone with ideas—a platform controlled by authorities who are on the spot and not far away in Langham Place and Whitehall.

ARGENTINA EXPOSED

LAST Sunday's elections in Argentina were superficially fair: polling took place without the violence and intimidation that marked Colonel Peron's campaign. But the opportunity for falsifying the results remains during the weeks during which the votes will be counted. It is unlikely that Peron will complacently allow Senor Tamborini, candidate of the opposition Democratic Union, to succeed the Fascist administration which has been ruling Argentina for nearly three years. Just before the election the United States published an official Blue Book showing how far Argentina had become a Fascist State on the European model. Men like Farrell and Peron—ruthless and ambitious—can have no intention of abiding by an honest verdict of the Argentine electorate.

The Blue Book is a damning indictment of the Argentine dictatorship. Based partly upon the examination of German officials and records seized after the Nazi collapse and partly upon material which has been available to the United Nations for a considerable time, it goes much further than the most hostile critics of Farrell and Peron in revealing the deliberate and consistent association between Argentine Fascism and the Nazis. It also makes United States' sponsorship of Argentina at San Francisco seem even more misguided than it appeared at the time.

In the first place, the Blue Book confirms the charges that President Castillo—who was overthrown by the military putsch in June 1943—was himself deeply involved with the Nazis. Under the guise of neutrality, Castillo "believed and hoped for Axis victory. He had determined eventually to come out on the side of the Axis Powers," as he secretly communicated to Berlin in May 1942. He was making continual efforts to secure military assistance from Germany. In July 1942 Martinez—who was to be the first Foreign Minister after the 1943 putsch—acting on behalf of Castillo, asked Erich Otto Meynen, Nazi Chargé d'Affaires in Buenos Aires, how it would be possible to arrange the shipment of arms from Germany. He pointed out that Argentina needed these arms in order to strengthen its opposition to the Allied demands for a rupture with the Axis Powers. These negotiations lapsed because the Wehrmacht found itself unable to spare any arms for shipment abroad at that time.

After the 1943 revolt, President Ramirez reopened the discussions—as he has recently confirmed in a public statement—and also reported to Berlin that his Government was carrying on subversive activities in neighbouring countries, designed to create a bloc of South American pro-Axis States in opposition to the Pan-American group under United States leadership. Aunos, at that time Franco's Ambassador in Buenos Aires, approached Meynen, saying that it was in Spain's interest that, after the Axis victory, Argentina should be preserved as a "nucleus of order out of which the reconstitution of normal conditions must proceed." For this reason he was willing to act as an intermediary in the arms discussions, and suggested that munitions could be supplied through Spain. A Military Commission from Argentina was then in Spain. Referring to its request for technical data for aircraft engine construction, Ribbentrop said that "it was very desirable from the point of view of foreign policy that this be satisfied." Aunos also reported to Meynen that a secret agreement had been reached between Argentina and Franco by which Spain was to supply Argentina with explosives. From the interrogation of German Foreign Office officials, it appears that a three-cornered deal between Germany, Spain and Argentina was arranged, but could not be carried through because of Germany's inability to meet Argentine demands for large-scale arms supplies.

Almost immediately after the revolt—when the dictatorship was protesting its adherence to hemisphere solidarity—J. S. Becker, the chief South American representative of the *Sicherheitsdienst*, Himmler's secret intelligence service, reported to Berlin that he had met Ramirez and that the latter wished to know whether German and Japanese submarines would protect the coast if Argentina went to war with her neighbours. As a token of his sincerity, Ramirez assured Becker that repressive measures were being applied only against agents of the United Nations.

It was decided to send an Argentine representative to Berlin to negotiate directly. By agreement with Becker, Ramirez selected a Nazi agent of Argentine nationality called Osmar Hellmuth, who was to ask Hitler and Himmler to arrange for the supply of Nazi technicians for Argentine arms factories and to assure them that a break with the Axis would take place only under extreme Allied pressure. If Argentina had to adopt control measures against German interests, Hellmuth was to make it clear that these were merely a concession to public opinion and should not be taken seriously. Colonel Peron was in charge of the arrangements for Hellmuth's trip—which ended ignominiously with his arrest by the Allies on his way to Europe.

The Blue Book then details the partnerships of the Argentine military and Himmler's *Sicherheitsdienst* in subversive intrigue in neighbouring countries, primarily Brazil, Bolivia, Uruguay and Paraguay, again under Peron's supervision.

It did not take long to produce results. In December 1943, the Bolivian Government was overthrown. The Blue Book reveals the link-up of the conspirators with Buenos Aires and Berlin, which had carefully prepared the putsch for many months. In close collaboration with Fascist and pro-Axis groups in neighbouring countries, both the Nazis and the Argentines continued their work clandestinely. In Brazil, Argentine military couriers were used to maintain contact with the *Integralistas*. Berlin was informed that Peron had decided to give the Chilean revolutionary movement a million U.S. dollars; and German officials lately interrogated have said that the ramifications of Nazi and Argentine intrigue in Paraguay and Uruguay have not yet been fully traced.

Whatever facet of Argentine politics is examined, a similar story emerges. Whether it is the transmission to Berlin of information about Allied shipping movements or other military intelligence; the movement of German capital from Europe; the introduction of bellicose Fascist propaganda into Argentine schools; throughout the war, Argentina has been as closely associated with the Nazi regime as distance and the necessity for caution allowed.

The Blue Book names the principal Nazi agents in Argentina who have not merely been protected but given active assistance by successive Argentine Governments. The changes among the leaders in the last four years have made little difference to this policy. Vast sums of money—much of it provided by German firms in Argentina—have been used for bribery and propaganda. The names of Argentina's present rulers continually appear in confidential German reports as "reliable" or "one of our confidence men." Subsidies from Axis sources have been given to many Argentine newspapers whilst the Government—suppressing democratic press criticism—has assisted them with priority supplies of newsprint and state advertising. German and Japanese schools and "cultural" organisations—such as the Labour Front—have been virtually unhindered and have continued to work and even openly to collect Nazi Party dues.

Above all, German economic influence in Argentina has been steadily growing. As Berlin was privately assured, the measures to control German firms were meaningless and taken only to provide a façade which would satisfy the Allies. By the end of 1945, only three minor German firms had been liquidated: the rest had actually received official protection and contract from the Argentine Government, and many of them are now working on armament production construction of strategic roads, and airports.

Pointing out that in Argentina the German have constructed a duplicate of the war economy of the Nazis, the Blue Book says that they possess to-day "the economic organisation—industrial commercial and agricultural—which they need to provide a base for the reconstitution of German aggressive power during the period when the homeland is still occupied." In the chemical construction, electrical, metal and munitions industries, German enterprise is now dominant.

A confidential report from the Nazi General Wolf, sent to Berlin in August 1944, summarises the success of the Argentine dictatorship in building a National Socialist state, and points out that under present conditions, it is "forced constantly to protest adherence to the democratic principle and the intention of co-operating within the framework of American solidarity." So Argentine delegates sit solemnly on the floor of Uno's Assembly and sign pledges to respect international commitments and the rights of the human person!

The remainder of the Blue Book presents evidence of Argentine preparations for war, of the repression of Argentine democracy by the most brutal terror—an eye-witness account of which recently appeared in this journal—and the establishment of a Fascist regime now providing a refuge for Nazi ideology and organisation.

This exposure by the United States was welcome and urgently needed. For even should the Democratic Union succeed in defeating Peron at the polls, the military leaders and their Nazi associates have too strong a grip on Argentine economy and politics to be easily unseated, as their sordid record reveals. In the past, Britain's fear of United States commercial rivalry in Argentina has prevented common action against successive Fascist administrations. This fear must be removed. If Peron is returned to power with the authority of an "honest" election behind him, the Argentine situation cannot be left merely to discussions among the American Republics: it will be an urgent matter for Uno to debate. But the first requirement is a common Anglo-American policy.

HOLY MATRIMONEY

THE State and the Bank are united
To close a long-standing affair,
Their troth near the Abbey is plighted
And Parliament blesses the pair.
Threadneedle Street's fabulous spinster
Departs with the Big Five's regrets,
The Court leads the bride to Westminster
And the bridegroom takes over her debts.

The Chancellor's arduous wooing
Has won her for better or worse
The match is the City's undoing
As he pockets her bottomless purse.
The past of the bride has been shady
With gents in the City she strayed,
But now she's the Chancellor's lady
Instead of the Treasury's jade.

The marriage will be consummated
Soon under a joint balance sheet,
And issue is keenly awaited
From the Treasury's new bridal suite.
The bridegroom is buying the bride out,
They will share their material goods;
And they hint that the honeymoon hideout
Will probably be Bretton Woods.

The State from the Bank need not borrow
Now the new nuptial knot has been tied—
There'll be gloom in the City to-morrow
As the Chancellor bears off his bride.
Her stock has been all underwritten,
Her cheque from the nation is blank—
Now the Bank is as safe as Great Britain
And Britain's as safe as the Bank.

SAGITTARIUS

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A LONDON DIARY

MR. EDEN was wrong the other day in suggesting that the Labour Party in the House of Commons contains about thirty members whose loyalty is rather Communist than Labour. I can myself think of three or four crypto-Communists in the House, and perhaps a bare dozen who are persistent fellow-travellers. To make up the thirty you would have to include a number of independently minded Socialists with special knowledge of foreign affairs who have on occasion the courage to criticise Mr. Bevin. I cannot blame Mr. Eden for this mistake, since sometimes Labour Ministers who should have known better have tried to discredit their critics by the simple device of dubbing them Communists. Some of these independent Labour M.P.s held during the war positions in which it was their job to get hold of information which seldom appeared in the press. They include people like Francis Noel-Baker (whom no one will accuse of being a Communist), who has just produced an extremely informative little book *Greece: the Whole Story* (Hutchinson, 3s 6d.). Francis Noel-Baker, like Lyall Wilkes, makes his criticisms on the basis of knowledge about Greece which often failed to reach the Foreign Secretary. Again, there is Philip Price, who has just come back from Russia and the Middle East, and who made a most important speech in the Foreign Affairs debate last week. Philip Price knows Russia and its language; he was *Manchester Guardian* correspondent in the revolutionary period, and yet nobody but a lunatic would regard him as a Communist or a fellow-traveller. The same may be said for Mr. Wilfrid Roberts, a good Liberal who has always taken a strong line on Spain. Or, again, Harold Davies, whose blunt revelations about the present position in India, Burma, Malaya, Ceylon and Indonesia—all of which he has recently visited—must have surprised many Members of Parliament. Mr. Driberg, who in recent months has been almost the only Labour specialist in the House on Indonesia, now has a strong ally. No worse service could be done than to suggest that because such men are critical of British policy in Spain or the Near or Far East; because they are sometimes unhappy about Mr. Bevin's highly emotional reactions towards the Soviet Union (his "frankness" pleases almost everyone); because, in effect, they think there should not be continuity in foreign affairs, that therefore they can be written off as Communists or disloyal to the Labour Party.

* * *

There are several Mr. Bevins. The one who spoke last Thursday wins every Socialist's heart. He was in his best form, following his economic-social-welfare-for-the-common-man line and not speaking from a brief. If he always stuck to this line he would not, I think, be seriously challenged within his own Party, except in one important point. He still refuses to admit that if this Socialist and realistic approach to foreign affairs is to be anything but verbiage, it must not be left to old-school diplomats to carry out. The M.P.s who emphasise this have been about the world and seen our diplomacy at work. They do not rely on the official telegrams which are all that any Foreign Minister can possibly find time to read. They know that you don't make a Socialist foreign policy by dressing Lord Palmerston in Keir Hardie's cap.

* * *

One of the M.P.s who vainly tried to catch the Speaker's eye in the foreign affairs debate was Ernest Davies, who is an authority on a number of subjects, among them Czechoslovakia. He was able to make his speech next day at a large lunch, attended mainly by British and Czech businessmen, officials and journalists. His address was a model of brevity, frankness and well-digested, first-hand information. Not everyone present liked it. I do not think, for instance, that it pleased the lady who sat opposite me; I was told that she was the wife of a director of Unilever. Not that Ernest Davies attacked Unilever or Coats. He only said that the British Government had been disgracefully wrong in demanding that compensation for British firms affected by Czech nationalisation should be paid in British or American currency. He found the same resentment at this in Czechoslovakia as you would have expected in Britain if American interests had been affected by our nationalisation of the mines and Washington had demanded compensation in dollars. Czechoslovakia, he added, is not a Soviet satellite, and she earnestly desires to maintain the closest relations with this country. But this British Note and, indeed, the general attitude of the Foreign Office give the impression that Britain under a Socialist Government has written off Czechoslovakia as a distant country we care little about, and that in showing so little understanding of another country carrying through a Socialist programme we are throwing away our goodwill and influence. I am glad to hear that a satisfactory compromise is likely to be reached in this matter of compensation.

* * *

Mostyn Lloyd was the sort of man who is never forgotten by his friends, but very easily forgotten by the world. For about twenty years he combined two important jobs, and did them both with disinterested, self-effacing efficiency. For this reason a career which began with the promise of great external success developed influentially, but anonymously. At Oxford he was distinguished both as a classical scholar and athlete; he went to the bar, became private secretary to Sir John Brunner, and looked all set for a political career. But he became a Fabian, lived at Toynbee and was caught up with the Webbs in the social agitation that followed the Poor Law Report in 1909. After the war, in which he served with the rank of Captain, his social interests led him to the staff of the School of Economics and to leader-writing in the *New Statesman*. He remained assistant editor of this journal until the London School of Economics moved to Cambridge in 1939. For a considerable period before its amalgamation with the *Nation*, he was virtually editor of the *New Statesman*. About his work as a University teacher, Professor Laski writes on another page. As his friend and colleague, both at the London School for a period, and later on, the NEW STATESMAN AND NATION, I should like to add that he was an admirable writer, terse, economical of words, and always well-informed; that his judgment was as sane as his scepticism was wholesome; that as a colleague no man could be more loyal or disinterested. I find it difficult to write about a man with whom I worked so happily and so long and for whom I felt so deep an affection. During the last period of his life his health failed, and though he was only sixty-seven, I am glad that he has died peacefully rather than survive an operation to live unhappily as a permanent invalid.

* * *

Very little appears in the Press about Luxembourg, where I spent a couple of days after my visit to Belgium. Happy is the country that is seldom in the news: it is certain to be a particularly pleasant place to live in. I was lucky enough to go there by car; we travelled from Brussels through the Ardennes villages that were devastated by the final Runstedt offensive. I was the guest of M. Bech, the Foreign Minister, on his way back from UNO. He is in a singularly fortunate position. A great conversationalist and a man of wide experience, everyone likes him and talks to him about their troubles, since no one has anything to gain or fear from his country. Luxembourg, with its total population of 300,000, is unique, a survival from the eighteenth-century world when Europe was mainly composed of Grand Duchies. To-day the Grand Duchess is still popular; she was received home after the liberation with immense and, I believe, genuine enthusiasm. The city itself, with its successive Austrian, Spanish and French fortresses surviving in days when they have become only picturesque, retains its beauty and its eighteenth-century flavour. But the government is democratic, and the extremes of riches and poverty are not there to be found. Wages, I believe, are the highest in Europe; they are 30 per cent. higher than in Belgium, with which Luxembourg has a customs union. The countryside is magnificent, and if you relish the risks of wild boar hunting, or prefer the tranquillity of trout fishing, the Ardennes is the place for you. If the great industrial companies that own the steelworks, on which the economy of Luxembourg depends, play a part in Luxembourg politics, they do not do so conspicuously. Luxembourg itself had a staunch Resistance movement. Indeed, the steelworkers carried out one of the few big strikes within Hitler's empire during the war.

* * *

I was sorry I had not time to visit the great steelworks in the South. To-day they are working only one-third of their capacity because they depended for coal mainly on the Ruhr. It may be partly for this reason that in the recent elections for workers' councils the Communists scored notable successes. I was asked on Sunday afternoon to meet, and speak to, a large number of the Socialist workers' representatives at a conference where they were to hear all about the government's new "Beveridge" plan. The speaker was the Minister of Reconstruction, Mr. Crier, who himself began as a boilermaker, and now, amongst other jobs, is responsible for rebuilding in the Ardennes. How soon and how fast he can rebuild depends on how soon the blast furnaces are all again at work. The economics of Luxembourg are not difficult to grasp, at least in outline. The Grand Duchy is almost self-sufficient in food, though it obtains some sugar from Belgium and luxuries from overseas. How much Luxembourg can import and how quickly reconstruct depends on how much steel she can make, and that depends on coal.

* * *

Though Eugene O'Neill's *All God's Chillun Got Wings* is a fine play, it can't be easy to put over to a London audience. Much of its power depends on the New York background of a white street-girl tragically married to an intellectually ambitious Negro trying to "buy white." And, with the best will in the world, it's hard for English actors to be convincing American slum-dwellers. All the more credit to the success of Unity's first production with a professional company. Louie Bradley and the coloured actor Robert Adams are both outstanding. The second act demands controlled hysteria from both the principals: it is a long time since I have seen this elusive emotion so well captured. This play about race relations was a courageous choice for a new company. I am looking forward to their next show—a new play by the author of *Thunder Rock*.

* * *

The enclosed delicious account of a football match in Germany reaches me from a British officer:—

> I came back from Dusseldorf on Thursday night, after a big football match, the first publicised one in which a German team was playing a British Army team. The Germans were better footballers, and in better condition than the troops, who haven't had much exercise lately, and didn't take the game so seriously. The score was three to one for the Germans. After the game, the huge German crowd was obviously delighted, and I heard two amusing comments from Germans speaking English to British soldiers. One said: "Why do the officers speak with the soldiers who have just lost?—surely they are angry with them?" Unfortunately I didn't catch the reply. Another elderly professor, who had doubtless been teaching about *lebensraum* a year ago, bubbled to a little cockney, who looked rather like a sparrow. "Do you realise what this means for Dusseldorf? We have beaten you at your national game . . ." "That's all right," said the cockney, "we've already beaten you at yours . . ."

CRITIC

INCIPIENT REVOLT

Lahore, by Air Mail.

VERY slowly, province by province, Indians are recording their political opinions at the polls. But their mood has found a more spontaneous expression in countless demonstrations in honour of the Indian National Army, which fought on the Japanese side in Burma. It is a mood of incipient revolt. The mass meetings and spectacular processions, the riots and the collections of money for this army's dependants mean only one thing. A disarmed people is trying to say that it envies the chance which came to these men to face the British Empire with arms in their hands. The birthday of their dead leader, Subhas Bose, was celebrated with mass meetings as a national holiday. His portrait is everywhere, and even in the dismal slums of Bombay the streets were decorated with flowers and flags. Congress has organised these demonstrations in spite of its pacifism and no one remembers now that Bose himself, once its president, was drummed out of its ranks. Even the Muslim League has had to take its part in backing the I.N.A. That Bose, a passionate man with a reckless strain of idealism in his composition, miscalculated when he allied himself with the Axis; that the men who escaped the rigours of Japanese imprisonment when they joined him, were prompted by mixed motives; that there are stains of brutality on the record of this army —all this Indians have forgotten. They have acquired a national hero, who for the first time since the Mutiny, led an army of liberation. How in this mood they will act, if yet another period of struggle lies before us, is a question that haunts me.

It is not only the mood of the people that we have to consider. The Indian Army is also affected. It watched the trial of three leading officers of the I.N.A. for treason and abetment of murder: no sooner were they convicted than they were pardoned and released. To-day they are touring the country and addressing public meetings as popular heroes. This clemency was, after the original blunder of the public trial, a wise political act, but it has shattered the confidence of Indian officers, who hitherto had been loyal. Some of them have talked frankly to me about their experiences in this war. It was the painfully familiar story of unequal treatment and the colour bar, even in the jungles of Burma. Allow what you will for exaggeration, the fact is that Indian officers are sore and bitter and bewildered. They argue that an army which cannot punish men guilty of active treason is nearing the end of its disciplined existence. To what new master must it look? Above all, how should it act if it is ordered to fire on its own countrymen? I shall not soon forget the perplexed and unhappy face of an officer who debated these questions with me and poured forth the tale of his experiences in a crack regiment famous for its loyal service. My impression is that the Indian Army can no longer be isolated from the nation. Some officers are now saluting the tricolour flag of Congress when they meet it in the streets, and more than once in public places the men have shouted "Jai Hind," the slogan of I.N.A. And the Indian Air Force, which went on strike for better conditions of service, has collected a big purse for the men of the I.N.A. It is clear that British rule cannot be prolonged by reliance on Indian bayonets.

Soldiers argue with realistic simplicity and few of them are politically conscious. It is otherwise with civilians. They watch our actions and weigh our words with an exaggerated subtlety. If soldiers cannot be sure that we mean to maintain our authority, civilians cannot believe that we really intend to hand over power. This scepticism is universal, and as yet the Labour Government has neither said nor done anything to allay it. It missed the chance to lessen the general bitterness by a complete political amnesty. Why, Indians ask, does it still retain the ban on the Socialist wing of Congress, and why is its leader, Jai Prakash Narain, with six hundred untried suspects, still in prison? It is fantastic that soldiers who fought against the Empire should be pardoned, while hundreds of peasants, who sabotaged the railways during the revolt of 1942, should be serving long terms of imprisonment. Everywhere I have been, from Bombay to Peshawar, I was assailed by such questions. Others turn on our doings in Indonesia. The hardest question of all to answer is why, after suspending it during the war, we have now resumed the recruitment of British candidates for the permanent cadres of the Indian Civil Service?

But it is from the failure of the Simla Conference that the present mood of distrust must be dated. Congress went into those negotiations prepared for generous compromises and accepted a ratio of equality between Muslims and Hindus in the Central Government which Lord Wavell was trying to form, though the Muslims amount to only a quarter of India's population. When Mr. Jinnah broke up the Conference by claiming all of the Muslim seats for his League, he certainly enhanced his own prestige. Muslims felt that he had scored a resounding victory over the Hindus and a drift of all the moderates and trimmers set in towards his camp. Indians, however, were not content to say that his tough tactics had succeeded. They argued from Lord Wavell's management of the Conference that it is still our conscious policy to use Hindu-Muslim differences as an excuse for doing nothing. Mr. Jinnah, they believe, would have given way if the Viceroy had called his bluff and threatened to form the Central Government without his participation. Most of us regretted this weakness at the time, but few of us realised how gravely it had compromised the future. The first consequence was that the Muslim League now believes that it can extort its maximum demands by intransigence. The second consequence was that Congress and the nationalist Muslims have lost the last vestige of their faith in our sincerity.

Meanwhile, as the elections proceed, it looks as if the results will present us with an even more complicated problem. The elections to the Central Assembly produced a delusively simple pattern. Congress won all the Hindu seats: the League swept the Muslim constituencies. For a moment it seemed that Pakistan could be the only possible solution. The only ground for hesitating to draw this conclusion was that the franchise for these Central Elections includes less than 2 per cent. of the whole population. But the provincial elections, which drag on till the end of March, already promise a baffling diversity. Congress will sweep all the mainly Hindu provinces; it has even won an absolute majority in Assam. But it is doubtful whether the League will be able to form a government in any of the provinces it claims for Pakistan. If it can do it in one or two of the five, it will be only with the help of the European votes. Take for example the case of Sind. In this overwhelmingly Muslim province, the League won 27 seats and Congress 22, but there are eight Muslims of two independent groups who have already joined Congress in a Coalition: three Europeans hold the balance. Though it is rash to risk a prediction, I have seen enough of the contest in the Frontier Province and Punjab to expect a somewhat similar result: no sober observer believes that the League can win an absolute majority or form a Government in either of them.

On a close view these elections are not impressive. There is some violence, much bribery, and more intimidation. I have heard the loud-speakers of League cars shouting their slogan "a curse on the infidel Hindus." Sometimes the Muslim clergy parade with a copy of the Koran to rally the faithful. The less scrupulous partisans are capable of threatening an illiterate peasant with the loss of his land, his water, his military pension, and his hope of salvation in the next world. The law permits candidates to hire buses to carry their supporters to the poll and even to supply them with food within a fixed limit of expenditure. It is a trial of strength, in which property and fanaticism are ranged against the mass appeal of Congress.

There has been no reasoned debate over the merits of Pakistan. None the less, the result is likely to show that the balance of forces in the provinces claimed for this Muslim State is either unfavourable to the League or else indecisive. These provincial elections are, moreover, more important for three reasons than the Central Elections. The franchise is wider, for it includes 13 per cent. of the whole population. Secondly, the provinces enjoy responsible self-government. Finally it is from the provincial legislatures, if the Cripps plan is followed, that the Constituent Assembly will be chosen by indirect election. To sum up: the League can claim that Muslims in the Central Elections have cast an overwhelming vote for Pakistan. Congress can reply that the provinces have not confirmed this verdict. Yet by general consent they were regarded as the units of self-determination. To concede Pakistan without a plebiscite would now be impossible.

This crisis calls for an honest and resolute mediator. But until, in some novel and dramatic way, we give proof of our will to surrender power, there is not a single group of Indians that would trust us to arbitrate.

H. N. BRAILSFORD

C. M. LLOYD

I WAS a colleague of C. M. Lloyd at the London School of Economics and Political Science from 1920 until his retirement in the summer of 1945. As I look back over those crowded years, the first thought that comes to my mind is of how grand a colleague he was. Few people I have known in academic life gave as much of their time so gladly to the problems and difficulties of other people.

Lloyd had a really good mind, clear, direct, with great analytic power. He was a fine teacher, who took immense pains to make his subject not merely clear, but also suggestive, to his students. It was upon them, and upon the organisation of his department at the School that he spent the thought that, otherwise, might have given us half-a-dozen books as good as his *Trade Unionism*. There is the book he might have written on Local Government, and the one he might have written on voluntary bodies and the State. Many social institutions in this country owe more than they will ever recognise to the fact that Lloyd gave to scores of students who are now their officials full measure of his knowledge and wisdom.

He was of a sceptical nature, with a deep streak of pessimism running through it. He had a power of ironic phrase when he chose to use it. He had, too, a deep sense of humour, not least happily displayed in the vein of half-amused satire which ran through both his talk and his teaching. He hated solemn men, and he always spoke with angry contempt of the dogmatic teacher who sought to impose a doctrine in his lectures. Lloyd always liked to leave a door open, for no one was more aware than he how dangerous is the closed room of thought in an academic institution.

His mind, I think, was essentially a concrete mind. He was more interested in people than in institutions, more interested in their administration than in their metaphysic. A good Socialist, who looked upon our society very much as the Webbs did in their *Decline of Capitalist Civilisation*, I yet think that his Socialism was less an organic body of ideas than a fierce hatred of suffering and poverty. I suspect that his Socialism was felt rather than thought, for in himself, it may well be unconsciously, Lloyd was culturally a natural aristocrat.

He was a deeply loyal person, and to those who won his regard, his devotion was unbreakable. To my generation in the School, Lloyd will leave a memory of selfless service, of those endless little acts of generosity that awaken life.

HAROLD J. LASKI

DONALD WOLFIT AT THE WINTER GARDEN

EVEN for those who have never seen him on the stage, it is difficult not to be prejudiced against Mr. Wolfit's acting. Justly or not, he has a name for inclining to a kind of Shakespearian production which the twentieth century has tried to outmode. In Shakespeare's major plays, the principal characters are themselves subordinated to a principal theme. An individual personage, however important, is one of many embodiments of a prevailing passion, only to be properly understood in the context of the opposite or analogous qualities of the rest of the characters in the play.

Now it is said that in Mr. Wolfit's productions, the play is subordinated less to a principal theme than to a principal actor, that we are back to a bad old fashion, the star system, only acceptable in those rapidly shrivelling areas of the provinces which are less sophisticated than London. It is said, maliciously, that Mr. Wolfit underproduces and undercasts the rest of his company in order to stand out by contrast: that he builds up a part as he builds up an entrance, by the hundred better-known devices of lighting and stage position. We are told, for instance, of the way in which he greets the polite applause demanded by such entrances with an almost but not quite invisible bow, fittingly contrasted with his appearance at the end of the play, when he clutches the curtain for support, just as exhausted, we hasten to add, whether he has been laying himself out with King Lear or trotting through twenty minutes of Touchstone.

Viewed in the cold light of the Winter Garden, does this new season prove the charges true? The answer is "no"—with reservations. Is it a weak company? It contains some remarkably bad actors, and one senior member of the company has a voice which reverberates with such an indistinct and gloomy echo that he seems permanently confined within an invisible cathedral. On the other hand, the warmth and grace of Miss Jessel reminds us how important it is to have a sympathetic Emilia who can take the part of the otherwise intolerably friendless Desdemona. Miss Rosalind Iden is once more leading lady. I always enjoy her performance. Movement and cadence, with her, are kept almost too modestly within the bounds of an exact style. But she can redeem from spinelessness the most feudally acquiescent moods of Shakespeare's heroines, and suggest a touching femininity even when they are most inclined to dress themselves up as boys; "A sense of weakness," in Hazlitt's words, "leaning on the strength of its affections for support." New to the cast are Godfrey Kenton, who knows how to speak blank verse, and Antony Eustrel, who is allowed his fair share of Iago. Without burning too much midnight oil over Granville Barker or Dr. Bradley, he gives the part considerable humour and a rough consistency. Now a criticism. The obvious links between Iago and Edmund made me long to see Eustrel as that character in King Lear. Why, instead, does Mr. Wolfit select a quite unsuitable actor for this fascinating and difficult part? In place of the superbly and casually godless character of dramatic fact, we saw an Edmund played by a pleasant young man whose favourite gesture was a rapid rotation of the right fist, by means of which he seemed to be continually winding himself up into a kind of jerky villainy, quite foreign to Edmund's character. Whether he is above superstition, or below it as Coleridge suggests, Edmund's earthy common sense is the strong stake-post to which the surging madness and sanities, the irrational loyalties and disloyalties of the play must be tethered, if they are to keep within the bounds of comprehension.

On the whole, Mr. Wolfit's production imposes on his mild company an unnatural fervour. Too many of the "difficult" speeches are shot off at rapid fire, by an actor who, the moment he has delivered them, is electrified into making his exit with a brisk, clockwork kind of walk, as if he were a defaulter being marched off after company orders. The actor most in need of production, naturally, is Mr. Wolfit himself. Just because his status is that of leading actor, his intemperance needs a stricter hand. He decides, as the villainous Iachimo, to finish his first scene on a slow exit and a caddish laugh. He ends his second scene in precisely the same way. And—I must ask readers to believe me—at the end of his third, where, secreted in Imogen's chamber, he shuts himself up in a box, the same devilish laugh is heard issuing from its inward parts, to a slow curtain. To speak of Mr. Wolfit's acting, his voice has a basic sing-song, a downward cadence. This is no handicap to him in the "queer" parts. His Shylock is most successful, full of careful observation and piecemeal analysis. There is more tragic force and reality in his Malvolio than in many of his bigger parts. The cadence does not drown the glorious words of Othello: it even emphasises their "witchcraft" quality. Lear is rightly judged his best part. His ravings have the majesty of the tempest in which they are set. It is only the humane and the straightforward which is beyond him. It is purgatory to hear Mr. Wolfit make a plain-song chant out of such phrases of Hamlet's as "in the beaten way of friendship" or "that old Lord, look you mock him not." Our gratitude is due, nevertheless, to Mr. Wolfit for having made Shakespeare his choice, and for allowing us, in this season, the unaccustomed pleasure of wandering through the "tender gloom" of the neglected and fascinating world of Cymbeline. STEPHEN POTTER

THE BALLET AT COVENT GARDEN

RESCUED from "dance-music," the Covent Garden Opera House recovered last week its historic dignity as the demesne of real music and real dancing. This marks one more stage on the slow and obstructed journey from the rigours of war to the amenities of peace. It is right that the Sadler's Wells Ballet should enjoy the honours of this auspicious reopening: from the time of their narrow escape from the invading Germans in Holland, through the worst years, and up to their recent performances for our troops in Germany, they have tirelessly maintained the high traditions of their art. At the same time, it is welcome news that they are to be followed at Covent Garden by the Stockholm and Paris opera companies. We most urgently need to resume our contacts with European culture; our artists in every medium have suffered no less than the public from years of enforced isolation. Happily the Arts Council, like the new trustees of Covent Garden, know that the arts, to maintain their vigour, must be exogamous. We trust that the Government will do everything possible to facilitate these interchanges.

The great Opera House, its aquamarine ceiling artfully emphasising the ardour of all the subjacent crimson and gold, is further dignified by its glorious history, from Handel, Kean, Jenny Lind and Fanny Elssler to those names already legendary, though within living memories, Patti, the de Reszkes, Melba, Caruso, and so to Frida Leider, Lotte Lehmann and that enchanting Elisabeth Schumann, whom we have lately had the happiness of welcoming back to London. The reopening made therefore an occasion, a gala, a declaration of peace. And the entertainment provided was appropriately lavish. The curtain rose up on a Watteau colonnade, through which silks and satins soon surged in a riot of colour, sweeping us from the so necessary, so odious, austerity of daily life into a world where even the Wicked Fairy has not the malevolence to curse her enemies with coupons and the insatiable demands of the export trade.

A full length classical ballet, *The Sleeping Princess*, is the supreme example of a very curious form of art. Never has there been music better for dancing to than this of Tchaikovsky's; and the demands upon the performers' virtuosity are no less exciting than exacting. Nevertheless, except to connoisseurs of technique, the ballet does not seem various enough to support its length. This need not condemn it æsthetically; a show of a hundred Still Lifes by Braque, or for that matter by Chardin, would also, except to the eyes of connoisseurs, be chargeable with monotony. One must further remember that time has modified the response to ballet of the spectator. It could have been described not unjustly as a leg-show for Grand Dukes—the equivalent of the Ziegfeld Follies in a conspicuously less vulgar society. The rigorously disciplined grace of dancers, the ingenuity of choreographers and stage-designers, the genius of musicians, by refining ballet into a miracle of style, enabled it to survive resplendently the disappearance from it of what was once a principal attraction. Classical ballet has long since lost all grossness of sexual appeal; no longer are the stalls packed with rakes gazing through opera-glasses at the ladies they protect. But the lack of variety remains to signify the conditions in which this form of art flowered. In the days when the shortness of the ballet-skirt was the exception allowed to an otherwise imperative taboo, the spectators felt no need for any additional excitement, such as modern ballets provide, *Petrouchka* or *La Boutique Fantasque* or *The Three-Cornered Hat*. Does the public to-day expect variety from the Folies-Bergère?

The Sadler's Wells company thoroughly deserve what they have at last received—a full-sized orchestra, a huge stage, costumes and scenery elaborated with no regard to expense. Mr. Oliver Messel has been prodigal in invention, and there are hundreds of costumes all embellished with interesting details. The Wicked Fairy's chariot and the Lilac Fairy's shallop are particularly happy. Mr. Constant Lambert's conducting is inspired by his enthusiasm for Tchaikovsky, and the orchestra will no doubt soon settle into the fluency he requires of them. Miss Margot Fonteyn adds charm to remarkable virtuosity, giving the right air of deceptive ease to the most athletic feats. Among the others Miss Beryl Grey as the Lilac Fairy was conspicuous by the assured poise of her gaiety and Mr. Helpmann as the Wicked Fairy by the sinister violence of his mime. This is a production that everyone will want to see.

SAM SMILES

RADIO NOTES

THE bouquets have been hurtling about lately—from J. B. Priestley to Russia, from Edward Murrow to Britain, from the B.B.C. to itself. Mr. Priestley made his points at the cost, I felt, of evading the present issue—much as a visiting royalty, giving away prizes at a school, magnanimously ignores the snooks and giggles in the front row. Mr. Murrow, a no less expert broadcaster, seemed more convincing—to an Englishman; but would an American audience have found his summing up of the British character any easier to accept than we found Mr. Priestley's encomium on contemporary Russian society? I doubt it. And I question, too, whether the B.B.C.'s panorama of its own growth in the past twenty-four years achieved more than is achieved by any Old Boys' Dinner. If you were not at the school and did not know the old boys, could you sit out such an entertainment? A fifteen-minute talk by one of the doyens of the Corporation, written and delivered with humour and vitality, might have been worth hearing; but sixty minutes of machine-made feature is unbearably tedious. The trouble about this kind of programme is that nobody really *wants* to write it, and unless you are interested in what you are writing you cannot make it interesting to others. Yet the dilemma is inescapable, because the occasion was only one of many—public and semi-public—which are constantly arising and demand to be dealt with. It seemed to be a law of human society that we cannot just ignore these occasions; some religious or atavistic feeling—some inherent need for ceremonial—compels us to observe them and to feel indignant if they are taken for granted. So, heaving a deep sigh, we dive into the properties box, among the moth-balls, and fish up "something that will do." What we really need is a whole new system of ceremonial formulæ, such as was invented by the Christian Order to which we now pay only lip service. And because we no longer feel these things with heart *and* mind, they have come to seem merely silly. Jennifer Wayne's clever series, "They," has run through the gamut of dead conventions and beliefs to which we still cling; but her implication, that these conventions are *intrinsically* wicked or foolish, seems to me a fallacy characteristic of our ignorant and conceited age. The kind of over-hygienic mind recommended by these programmes is not only an impossibility; it is undesirable, because man will only survive by preserving the diversity and even the incongruity of his nature.

Verdi's Requiem. This performance bore every sign of having been carefully prepared, and I have no doubt that, on the spot, the effect must often have been very fine. As a broadcast it left a good deal to be desired; we were disagreeably conscious of the great

open spaces of the Albert Hall—especially at the beginning of the *Dies Irae*, where the dramatic pauses sounded like faults of transmission. The solo voices were almost always too distant, and, in general, I think it must be admitted that English singers are as powerless to give renderings of Italian music that sound at all authentic, as Italian soloists are incapable of singing Mozart or Purcell without making them sound like Puccini. This should not, of course, deter us from performing Italian music with English artists; but it is a fact to be borne in mind when criticising either music or performance.

While on the subject of broadcasts from concert halls I should like to suggest that the level of the applause, once it has been established, might with advantage be lowered by the engineers in control of the broadcast. It is very tiresome to have to leap across the room to turn down the volume of what appears to be an approaching buzz-bomb, only to have to leap across again and turn it up when the music recommences.

The Young Visiters. This broadcast was a very good idea, but I question the wisdom of distributing the readings between two voices. No form of dramatisation is involved and the division appears to be quite arbitrary. Spike Hughes and Barbara MacFadyean have charming voices, but I can discover no system in their antiphony, and it seems to me that they spoil the delicious humour of the book by adopting a "children's hour" tone of voice. After all, *The Young Visiters* was not *meant* to be funny, and only becomes so when read as if it were written by, say, Henry James.

A Journey Through Spain. This exciting and altogether unusual broadcast was a beautiful example of what can be done in radio without adventitious aids. In poetical vividness alone Laurie Lee's talk reminded me of Dylan Thomas's *Memories of Christmas*. I can imagine no higher praise.

RECOMMENDATIONS: *Sunday, March* 3.—"Wild Flowers of Britain" (Geoffrey Grigson, 1.25 p.m.); Concert (2.30 p.m.); Greek Art (Charles Seltman, 6.15 p.m.); Fireworks at Cremorne (7 p.m.); Arthur Koestler (9.15 p.m.); Scrapbook for 1910 (9.30 p.m.).

Monday, March 4th—Plain English (Forces Educ. Broadcasts, L.P., 10 a.m.); Negro Writing (6.20 p.m.); Ely Culbertson (11.3 p.m.); William Walton Piano Quartet (11.25 p.m.).

Tuesday, March 5th—The Making of a Poem (11.3 p.m.).

Wednesday, March 6th.—Symphony Concert (7 p.m.).

Thursday, March 7th.—Concert (7.15 p.m.).

Friday, March 8th.—Ezio Pinza (3 p.m.); W. H. Davies (11.30 p.m.); Bach Concerto in A minor, for four pianos and Orchestra (11.45 p.m.).

Saturday, March 9th.—Laburnum Grove (9.20 p.m.).

EDWARD SACKVILLE WEST.

PLAYS AND PICTURES

"The Guinea-pig" at the Criterion

The Fleming Report having recommended the infiltration into Public Schools of boys from Elementary Schools, one such is taken as a test-case, and put into the house of a peculiarly old-fashioned man, who finds himself having to defend his prejudices against his wife, his daughter, and his asisstant as well as against his headmaster. Mr. Chetham Strode has weakened his play by making his own views too explicit, and sometimes the dialogue suggests a "To start you talking" feature on the wireless. Similarly, he has weighted the scales much too heavily against the Blimpish housemaster. Not only does he seem to have been born in 1860 rather than 1890, but he seldom displays any trait that explains why he is so generally liked even by those who disagree with him. Nevertheless the play is one of the most enjoyable now to be seen in London. The comedy in it is excellent, the subject is interesting, and the acting is masterly. Mr. Cecil Trouncer, Mr. Derek Blomfield, Miss Edith Sharpe, Miss Rachel Gurney, Miss Joan Hickson, and Mr. Duncan Lewis, all deserve the warmest praise. Miss Moyra Verschoyle's sets are most plausible.

* * *

In last week's notice of the Toynbee Hall Theatre, the number of children attending performances of *Great Expectations* should have been 24,000, not 2,400.

THE MOVIES

"Scarlet Street," at the Leicester Square
"Metropolitain," at Studio One
"Three Strangers," at the Astoria
"Night Boat to Dublin," at the Empire

A horripilation of thrillers. None quite in the first class (full marks for speed, menace, local colour), but I enjoyed *Scarlet Street*. Trust Hollywood, in a *genre* as conventional as a pack of cards, to deal an interesting hand. They have the right photography, and they attract the right kind of actors. I don't think personally that *Scarlet Street*, directed by Fritz Lang, comes up to last year's *A Woman in the Window*: this time he manages an authentic ending, but is pretty slow getting there. And not especially convincing. Mr. Edward G. Robinson, sympathetic as ever, and murdering now not in dream but in fact, gets away with everything except one's credulity. Not that a cashier has never loved a tart, discovered his mistake, stuck an ice-pick in her, and tottered away to a life of pavements and park seats: such things no doubt happen, but Mr. Robinson's features don't persuade. The attraction, however, of *Scarlet Street* lies in the spotted idyll of Johnnie and Lazylegs, a ripe extension from the earlier film. What an expert is Mr. Dan Duryea! One discovers him like some odd animal—the gavial for example—hitherto unnoticed at the Zoo. His pimping Johnnie is a mature blend of toady and viper, and everything about him—his wideness, his fulsome sneer, his unneeded braces—excruciates. This (Mr. Duryea's second triumph) is the moment to catch him, before he becomes stereotyped or sentimentalised out of existence. And in Miss Joan Bennett he has a seductive mate; one can appreciate the beginning if not the end of Mr. Robinson's downfall.

Metropolitain: pre-war French film about murder seen at upstairs windows, neat story, shoddy photography, a lavish performance in black satin by Mlle. Ginette Leclerc, whom even the innocent Mr. Robinson would recognise as being on the fringe of Scarlet Street. Hardly, perhaps, at this date exportable, but worth a visit for those who have enjoyed the open-air runs of the Métro. Charming moment at the end when a workman, having brought good tidings, says "Permettez?" and pockets all the cigarette ends in the room.

No such distinguishing touch picks out the Hollywood London of *Three Strangers*, which attempts at times a Cockney of its own. Tedious story, well-acted, especially by Sydney Greenstreet, who at the end dazzles with a piece of horrific comedy, beautifully judged. *Night Boat to Dublin*—the English sample of this bunch—has no really outstanding feature. It is a conventional spy thriller, fairly quick and amusing, with M.I.5 catching boat-trains and climbing along window ledges, and a Swedish professor in a Devon castle handing over atom secrets to the Nazis under the impression that they are the British Government. That beats anything else, this week, in the way of innocence.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

SHOWS

This week I have no room to do more than recommend a visit to several exhibitions. Apart from Ensors at the National Gallery, which I hope to discuss next week, there are Jack Yeats at Wildenstein's, enjoyable mixed shows at the Leicester and the Redfern, a rewarding anthology of nineteenth-century French pictures, especially of the Barbizon School at the Beaux Arts, the charming Zulawski at the Arcade Gallery, and at Roland, Browse and Delbanco paintings by Clifford Hall, a highly accomplished young artist, who in the most recent of his works seems to be finding what he wants to say, and drawings by K. Wilczynski, who treats the baroque architecture of Rome with a Slav and feminine charm, giving one a lot of pleasure.

ROGER MARVELL

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to H. Strang.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

"Kramer [commandant of the Belsen camp] was an extremely nice fellow," said Colonel T. M. Backhouse, chief prosecutor in the Belsen trial, speaking at Altrincham on Thursday. "It never occurred to him that he was doing wrong in obeying his orders. He knew he was going to hang, and never thought the trial was anything but a show, but he was only too pleased to help in any way he could."—Report in *Manchester Guardian*.

"How are your budgerigars?" I asked this medium. Alas, I learned that both had gone. One died and the other, which he had taught to say *Psychic News*, flew out of the window and never returned. Perhaps, in this case, the vocal feat proved too much.—*Psychic News*.

In yesterday's *Daily Express* Mr. Gallacher, Communist M.P. for West Fife, was wrongly reported as saying that the British Empire got nearer to our dream of a perfect world than anything else which existed.—*Daily Express*.

As Covent Garden emptied last night Mr. Bevin, a substantial piece of flotsam, was borne out on the tide of the retreating audience. Just behind him in the crush was a lady with all the appearance of a dowager of the old school. She was heard to exclaim "There he is! I must touch him." And she bent forward and lightly touched the shoulder of Mr. Bevin's coat and was satisfied.—*Manchester Guardian*.

Correspondence

THE MIDDLE EAST

SIR,—In the article on the "Clash in the Middle East," you conclude that if "the rising tide of pan-Arabism submerges the Jewish establishment in Palestine and the Christian Lebanon, the only friends whose loyalty has never wavered will have been sacrificed to the romantic chimera of a great Arab union."

To begin with, we would point out that the phrase "the rising tide of pan-Arabism" has a sinister and menacing connotation which is entirely misleading and unjust. The Arab struggle and the attempt to form an Arab union represent fundamentally a national liberation movement, a movement aiming at freedom from foreign domination and exploitation, and which as such should enlist your sympathy rather than arouse your apprehension. There is no difference between it and the Indian national liberation movement, yet we have not heard you speak with alarm of "the rising tide of pan-Indianism." The reason for this discrimination seems to lie in your concern for "the Jewish establishment in Palestine and the Christian Lebanon." If by the Jewish establishment in Palestine you mean the Zionist movement, from which it is indeed at the moment inseparable, then surely the boot is on the other foot; for it is Zionism that is aggressively threatening and opposing the Arab liberation movement and not vice versa. The opposition of the Zionists to the independence of Transjordan is only one example of the general hostility with which the Zionists and their supporters regard the whole Arab liberation movement because it is resisting their political designs in Palestine.

More astonishing still are your remarks about the Christian Lebanese. The Christians of the Lebanon (who in any case are only just over 50 per cent. of the total population of the country) are also Arabs and have no wish to be either excluded from the Arab movement or defended against it. The Lebanon's voluntary membership of the Arab League and its whole-hearted collaboration with the other member States are a clear proof of this. There are also 100,000 Christian Arabs in Palestine itself, but they

are all solidly united with their Moslem compatriots in opposing Zionism.

Again, Sir, any plea for the encouragement of Zionism in Palestine against the will of the Arabs is not only undemocratic but also short-sighted in the extreme. For it envisages in effect the support of a Zionist enclave of less than a million Jews forcibly established in the midst of an Arab population of about forty millions, all interlocked in opposition to it. And you advocate this support upon the grounds of the alleged "loyalty" of this artificially created minority. Apart from the unmistakably imperialist flavour of this argument, and the seeds of future conflict which it carries, we would point out that it would be false and dangerous on Britain's part to regard the Arabs as her enemies or the Zionists as her devoted friends.

As to your conclusion that "it would surely have been wiser for both the British and the Russians to maintain the original policy . . . which was . . . to accept the facts of each other's interests," one cannot but deduce that you are in fact advocating spheres of influence and power politics in the Middle East. The advocacy of such a policy by your paper is very disconcerting, especially to those who see in the progressiveness of political thought in Britain, generally reflected in THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION and other papers of its way of thinking, one of the great hopes of humanity. If a clash in the Middle East is undesirable, the only sensible and moral way of preventing it is to stop the growth of an artificial and unhealthy movement like Zionism and to support the demand of the indigenous peoples of the Middle East to achieve the one thing which would prevent such a clash, namely complete independence from all foreign interference.

EDWARD ATIYAH
ANWAR NASHASHIBI

The Arab Office,
161 St. Stephen's House, S.W.1.

[We print this letter as an example of the emotions that characterise many national movements today. As it happens, we have urged that many more Jews should be admitted to a Palestinian State, but we have not supported Zionism or a Jewish State. Our article argued that the attempt to maintain British supremacy in the Middle East by alliance with Arab potentates rather than by co-operating with other Powers in raising the standard of living among all the peoples of the Middle East, was a mistake.—ED. *N.S. & N.*]

BUILDING INCENTIVES

SIR,—The Ministry of Health, in a well-meaning attempt to prevent profiteering in the present housing shortage, has imposed a price ceiling on new houses. The size of houses is also controlled. When the ceiling was fixed, last autumn, it left a bare margin of profit on a soundly constructed house. Since that time, however, wages have risen 4*d.* an hour, or nearly 15 per cent. But the Ministry has ruled that there must be no corresponding increase in the selling price of houses. Its argument, surely not to be taken seriously, is that the cost will not be greater because the men will work harder.

The builder has only one alternative. He must either cut down the quality of the building, or go out of business. The first thing to go will be all those small comforts that were planned. If that is not enough, he must resort to real "jerry-building."

The regulations are far too rigid, in that no allowance is made for fully detached houses as against semi-detached or terraced houses, etc. Who will build a more expensive fully detached house, when he can get as much for a semi-detached one? The present rigid regulations invite "jerry-building" of the worst type.

A BUILDER

SIR,—As a building craftsman I wish to protest against the publication in your journal of an article which is bound to raise a great deal of indignation among operatives who have long fought to maintain trade unionism and fair play in the building industry. The article very cleverly attempts to conceal, by carefully chosen words, an advocacy of a system far worse than "payment by results."

There is nothing new in the policy supported by your contributor, and it has been used secretly by the worst of master builders for many years. An extra few pence in the wage packets of selected operatives in order for them to set the pace is not a method which will meet with anything but antagonism among good trade unionists. I do not know what the Government proposals are, but if they are along the lines indicated by your contributor, and he speaks with seeming authority, then they are asking for a whole heap of trouble. There is a very grave danger of what has been pernicious in a capitalist system suddenly becoming virtuous in a Socialist administration. Witness the forced piece-work system condemned under capitalism, now glorified in the U.S.S.R. as the noble policy of Stakhanovism.

I believe in "the nucleus of good craftsmen," but good craftsmen do not want bribing. A nucleus of good and steady craftsmen can be formed who could produce maximum results, actuated by public spirit, and not egged on by a system of unequal wages. How can a good and honest craftsman or labourer urge others by word and deed to equal his extra output, with the knowledge that his reward will be greater then theirs?

KEN JONES
Morlaix, Reading Road,
Finchampstead, Berks.

NON-INTERVENTION AND SPAIN

SIR,—Are we afraid of General Franco? Why? Because we like oranges and sherry and fear he will not send us any if we are unkind to him? Or because the Pope likes him and we daren't cross the Pope? Or do we agree with the Pope in finding something lovable about the little man because he has such a healthy dislike for Communists?

But we can get oranges and sherry from the Empire: the Pope is a Christian and must forgive us even if we do cross him: and we didn't dislike the Communists during the period of the Resistance Movements—in fact, we thought rather well of them. Mr. Bevin said he couldn't feel it right to let down the Polish soldiers, whose services we were glad to have when we needed them, and we agreed with him (though perhaps it wasn't clear that anyone had suggested letting them down). But what about Garcia, Republican Spaniard, fighter in the French Resistance, executed last week by Franco?

Let's not labour the point. It is clear enough. We were cowardly and hypocritical about Non-Intervention and Munich, and it was very bad for our national health that we were so. Disgrace is a paralysing poison. England is not in a very good state to stand another heavy dose so soon.

VALENTINE ACKLAND
Frome Vauchurch,
Maiden Newton, Dorset.

PANEL PRACTICE

SIR,—I write to endorse everything that Dr. Saklatvala has said with regard to panel practice, and the amount of the capitation fee. I speak from personal experience, for I was in panel practice for six years. I gave it up as it seemed to me to be a travesty of medicine. The reason was not the capitation system, but the capitation fee was so small that to make a living one had to take on too many patients. The consequence was overcrowded surgeries morning and evening and excessively long visiting lists, both of which together left no time for good work, not to speak of necessary leisure. Add to this night calls, and life becomes a nightmare.

The root of the trouble is, as I have said, the inadequate capitation fee. It has long seemed to me strange that a man or woman can get his or her medical attendance guaranteed for less than 10*s.* annually, i.e., less than they would cheerfully spend on cigarettes or the cinema weekly.

Richard Dobson

CHINA CYCLE

'Mr. Dobson's account of his years in Central and Southern China as a travelling agent of the British-American Tobacco Co., whose duty was to see that the cigarettes got through even between the lines of Japanese invasion, is wholeheartedly to be recommended. Easy and unpretentious in style but exceedingly graphic, and enlivened by much delicious humour, it abounds in absorbing descriptions of foreign and Chinese life . . .'
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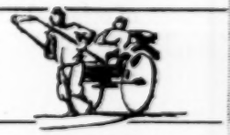

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JONATHAN CAPE

The National Health Service is not going to mend this because there will still be as much work for each doctor to do, whether he is paid by salary or capitation fee. The only remedy is to increase the present number of doctors. This can only be done by making the conditions of the new service attractive.

Obstetric Hospital, F. J. BROWNE
Huntley Street, London, W.C.1.

I.R.A. PRISONERS IN ENGLAND

SIR,—So far as our present information goes, some 50 I.R.A. prisoners are still held in English prisons on charges arising out of the series of bomb-attacks that took place in 1939. Two men, Barnes and McCormack, were executed in Coventry, where lives were lost. Elsewhere damage was confined to property. We do not attempt to condone this campaign; on the contrary, we consider it misguided, foolish, and futile, apart from the tragic loss of life of harmless civilians; but it must also be remembered, in explanation of it, that in 1938 as many as 16 explosions directed upon Catholics and Nationalists took place in the six counties, and no one was punished. All reprisal campaigns are bad, and in them innocent people usually suffer.

In England, at the time of the trials, feeling naturally ran high, and sentences in most cases were excessive, ranging from 20 years to 10 years. Three women got 10 years each for harbouring or helping. Some prisoners have died of T.B., and one at least has become insane and been removed to Broadmoor; his case needs investigation and with proper treatment, if released, he would, in all probability, recover, his breakdown being due to prison conditions.

We feel that with a Labour Government in power it is time to urge an amnesty for these and other political prisoners, particularly in view of the fact that, in the case of the I.R.A. prisoners, these men and women have already spent years in prison, and the 10-year prisoners are already nearing the end of their long sentences. It would be both humane and a friendly gesture to allow these men and women to return to their homes and families without further delay.

CLARE ANNESLEY. ETHEL MANNIN.
FENNER BROCKWAY. CLARE SHERIDAN.
AUGUSTUS JOHN. HANNA SHEEHY SKEFFINGTON.

C.O.s ON THE LAND

SIR,—The Government Bill for the release of conscientious objectors, after passing through the Commons, has been characteristically blocked by the Opposition in the Lords. They want, among other things, an amendment making the Essential Work Order operative on C.O.s released in their age plus service groups. This in effect would block the release of the great majority, since the majority of conditionally exempted C.O.s are on the land.

Their Lordships argue that to release the C.O.s from the land would be a grave injustice to those still tied to it, and would be a cause of discontent.

Certainly there is discontent among land workers, but it is because they are tied while millions of other workers are free to look for higher paid jobs. It is fantastic to suggest that a small handful of C.O.s, released in group driblets, will swell a discontent due to such a vast and fundamental grievance.

And who are these discontented workers in agriculture who are threatened with the grave injustice of the C.O.s' release? Are they the older men who were on the land long before the war and belong to traditional country stock? Or the country youths who grew up on the land during the war? Or the young men who were content with the land for the duration because it was very much to their advantage to sit tight? When the alternative was military service, there was no noticeable agitation to get out of this reserved occupation. But now that the war is over, the young men want higher paid jobs and the amenities of the towns. But surely their case is not quite parallel with that of the C.O. who was yanked out of the job for which he had trained and qualified, and dumped on to the land willy-nilly. I, myself, at the age of 38, have been loading muck-carts and such-like for 5½ years; but after 12 years' expensive education in public school and university, and six years as senior English master in a school, does that represent the summit of my usefulness to society in peace time?

And if it is the young men who, in the main, are discontented at being tied to the land, they still have equality with the young C.O. who, being in a late release group, remains tied also. To enforce the Essential Work Order, therefore, merely penalises the older C.O. whose age and service have qualified him for immediate release.

The strenuous efforts made by Conservative Peers to prevent a Labour Government conferring the blessings of individual freedom on a tiny minority come strangely from those who so loudly proclaim themselves champions of freedom against Socialist control.

Pusey Lodge Farm, DONALD GILCHRIST
Faringdon, Berks.

"IS GOD AN ENGLISHMAN?"

SIR,—I don't wish to fall into Mr. de Hartog's error of arguing from insufficient premises. I have only had the pleasure of seeing one of his plays. I think, however, that we have at least a dozen British dramatists whose work can be fairly compared with his in seriousness of purpose and technical skill.

Not one of these ladies and gentlemen has had the good fortune to attain two London productions within the past six months. I think they will be puzzled to know what he is complaining about.

Only the other day the Dramatic Critics handled one of these gentlemen, Mr. Clifford Bax, much more rudely than they did Mr. de Hartog. Besides, it is a grave error to suppose that London Dramatic Critics are in any sense typical Englishmen.

The Manager's reluctance to engage a foreign actor for one of Mr. de Hartog's plays can be explained in many ways. Some of us remember the inundation of florid and unintelligible actors that swamped our stage after the last war and feel not ungrateful to the Manager. JAMES BRIDIE

16 Roman Road,
Bearsden, Dumbartonshire.

SIR,—The quotation, "If I love you, it is none of your business," is not by Heinrich Heine, but by Goethe, *Wilhelm Meister*. L. J.

6 Westcotes Drive, Leicester.

COMPETITIONS

SIR,—I am pleased to notice that Mr. Allan M. Laing has again won a prize in your competition by skilful recourse to one of my books. Five of his quotations this week are from *A Peck of Troubles*. When on a previous occasion he lifted "Servants be not so delygent as thei were wonto bee," which I took from Jane Stonor, I begrudged him the credit he was given for the happy find. Now I invite him and other competitors to make further unacknowledged use of me. DANIEL GEORGE.

[Mr. Laing replies: "On behalf of my fellow-competitors, I thank Mr. George for his invitation; but isn't it superfluous? When an anthologist has published his non-copyright 'finds,' they are surely as much public property as similar extracts from a dictionary of quotations. Must competitors also mention the particular dictionary they happen to be using? Mr. George cannot really expect the titular immortality of the grafting botanist: we cannot forever go on tacking his name to those of Jane Stonor and Lady Louisa Stuart. I am confident, too, that he is mistaken in believing that readers credit me or my fellow-competitors with anything more than 'skilful recourse' to the volumes of collected 'finds' on our shelves, including his own two delightful anthologies: *A Peck of Troubles* and *Pick and Choose*."—Ed., *N. S. & N.*]

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

"*Ca pue la merde et la mort*," said a travelled friend of the Goncourts whom they had asked for his impressions of a journey through the Chinese Empire. It is a remark that must have occurred to many later travellers, overlooking some vast tawny northern plain, naked and dusty in the bright spring sunshine, but raised and roughened as far as the eye could reach with innumerable grave-mounds: when they passed row after row of the conical brick ovens in which a provident peasantry stores up its waste products, or stopped their noses against the strangely mingled odours of a Chinese town or village. To pay even the briefest visit to an ancient Chinese city, drive through its winged gates into the adjacent countryside and stand momentarily upon the fringe of the gigantic hinterland, is an imaginative experience of the kind that only travel furnishes. You have an idea of distance beyond distance, of mountain-screen behind mountain-screen and of valley succeeding valley, every crumbling acre toiled over and treasured by the blue-smocked inhabitants of uncounted mud-walled villages, patiently digging and manuring till they are themselves dug in . . . The Chinese landscape seems an enormous vacuum, and you, the traveller, poised on its edge, solitary and insignificant as, except in instants of deep physical and nervous dejection, you have never felt before.

You may remember then how De Quincey, whose knowledge of China was limited to travellers' tales, declared that merely to think of the country and its people depressed and terrified him. Since De Quincey's day a host of Western scholars and explorers have helped to clarify our understanding of the Chinese background and have demonstrated, for example, that what was once considered the flower of Chinese art and craftsmanship—the scroll-paintings, jades and lacquers of the age of Ch'ien Lung—was, in fact, the debased offshoot of a declining civilisation. Modern research has given us some superficial acquaintance with the incomparable achievements of the T'ang and Sung dynasties; it has excavated the bronzes and the carvings of Han, and has photographed magnificent works of monumental sculpture. Yet China's contribution to our world heritage, for the average educated Westerner, remains extremely enigmatic. His mind cannot compass such a tremendous expanse of years: he is astonished by the persistent vitality of the Chinese people, yet baffled by the strain of rigid intellectual conservatism that, at least until the fall of the Manchu dynasty, pervaded many aspects of their culture. His own inheritance is revolutionary. He is conscious of his personal debt to the past; but every century he can look back on has brought with it some violent and far-reaching upheaval in thought and art and manners. In the past, it may strike him, the past assimilates the present: Chronos perpetually devours his children: Athena springs from the head of Jove, only to sink back again.

Nor are these misgivings the property of the West alone. Reading the books of modern Chinese intellectuals, anxious to persuade us that a contemporary panacea is now in process of being applied to all the ancient evils, I seem to detect an attitude towards the past both reluctantly respectful and unconsciously apprehensive. Thus Lin Yutang, in a recent work describing his visit to a thriving Kuomintang stronghold, writes—with veneration but also, I felt, with a certain hesitation—of the immense relics of the vanished city of Ch'ang-an that lie just beyond its purlieus. Yes, there is too much of the past in China; its characteristics are too deeply engrained, too alien from his own traditions and inherited way of thinking, for the ordinary Westerner to digest with any comfort. Only art provides an occasional release. Suddenly from flaking scroll or green-encrusted vessel glimmers an assurance that, although human races are vastly different, between the minds of individual artists there are unnumbered points of contact. The ruins of Ch'ang-an are largely unexplored; but a reader can turn to the English renderings of poems composed when that deserted site was a great imperial metropolis, alive with scholarly officials, and the resort of famous poets, whose sensibility responded to the emotions that underlie all poetic literature, and who translated their response into elaborate literary forms that are still comprehensible and still profoundly moving.

Many years have passed since Arthur Waley published his first volume of translations from the Chinese. At the time there was a murmur of criticism, mostly unintelligent. How much, we were asked, did the charm of these renderings owe to the translator? Across the gulf of more than a thousand years, how authentic was the echo of Po Chü-i's voice? Was not Chinese poetry a kind of sleight-of-hand?—the last a suggestion made with such blustering emphasis by one well-known Georgian poet that Mr. Waley (it is related) silently handed his critic a sheet of paper and a pencil—and handed back the result, when he had examined it, as gravely and courteously, but no less silently. Japanese critics, on the other hand, who, unlike Mr. Waley's victim, were equally familiar with English and Chinese verse, have informed me that, although they did not always agree with the English translator's choice of *vers libre* as a medium, they could not quarrel with his accuracy or dispute his scholarship. And then, scholarship apart, these versions possess a distinguishing trait that could not fail to recommend them—Arthur Waley is a poet in his own right; he handles free verse easily and gracefully as it has been handled by few other modern writers.

Several enthusiasts, including H. A. Giles, Witter Bynner, Amy Lowell and Harold Acton (the author of felicitous renderings of contemporary Chinese poems), have contributed to *From the Chinese*, an excellent little anthology edited by R. C. Trevelyan (Oxford Press, 5s.); but, though their touch is often evocative and their choice of language happy, none, I think, has yet quite attained to Arthur Waley's standard. Under his direction, as in one of those panoramic Chinese pictures where, between drifts of cloud, the red eaves of a palace or temple, a crag, a foaming torrent, a terraced hillside, emerge in a series of brief and brilliant glimpses, we gain an impression, fragmentary but vivid, of two thousand years of literature. Here are folk-songs from the *Book of Odes*, written before the time of the Persian attack on Greece, and poems by Li Po, Tu Fu and Po Chü-i, scholars, officials and men of the world, who flourished in the eighth and ninth centuries. Of the three, Po Chü-i seems from the Western point of view most immediately sympathetic. To compare different arts, and poets who spring from different races and different periods, is always somewhat dangerous. But there are occasions when Po Chü-i would appear to be very close to Herrick (a far more robust and original poet than is usually suspected); while his absorption in, and identification of himself with, the scene he is describing, recall the Sung landscape-painters, brought up in the school of Tao. Not that Po Chü-i is a wholly impersonal poet. The great majority of his poems begin in the first person singular: he is sad or tired or nostalgic; he is growing bald and growing old and remembers the friends he has left behind in the courts of the imperial city. But the customary effect of his verses is to lead the reader's mind from sensations that are personal to emotions that are general, till "I" has merged and dissolved in the mood of time and place.

Just as captivating—and perhaps more stimulating—are poets of an earlier epoch.

> During the Han dynasty (writes Mr. Trevelyan) between 206 B.C. and A.D. 220, when China was emerging from a feudal and semi-barbaric society into a more stable and cultured civilisation, a number of poems were written, which in style and subject-matter were very different from the classical types. They were composed not in symmetrical stanzas, but in irregular verses of changing character . . . They often show a vigour and breadth of imagination unlike anything else in Chinese literature.

Mr. Trevelyan instances "The Bones of Chuang Tzu," by Chang Hêng (A.D. 78–139), a poem which he declares "need not fear comparison with Lucretius and Leopardi . . ." That it is an astonishing work there can be no question, at least in the energetic guise that Mr. Waley lends it. His employment of the English language is always supple and ingenious; translating Po Chü-i, he achieves rhythmic effects of unusual pliancy and smoothness well suited to that poet's peculiar literary temperament; but in this poem he strikes out into far stormier, more dramatic measures. The protagonist has embarked on some interminable nightmare journey, through the "Nine Wilds" and the "eight continents," across "red deserts," and "northward waded through the wintry burghs of Yu":

> And now with rearing of rein-horse,
> Plunging of the tracer, round I fetched
> My high-roofed chariot to westward.
> Along the dykes we loitered, past many meadows,
> And far away among the dunes and hills.
> Suddenly I looked and by the road-side
> I saw a man's bones lying in the squelchy earth,
> Black rime-frost over him; and I in sorrow spoke
> And asked him, saying, "Dead man, how was it?
> Fled you with your friend from famine and for the last grains
> Gambled and lost? Was this earth your tomb,
> Or did floods carry you from afar? Were you mighty, were you wise,
> Were you foolish and poor? A warrior or a girl?"

The living speaker offers to pray for the dead man's resurrection:

> The dead man answered me:
> "O Friend, how strange and unacceptable your words! . .
> Of the Primal Spirit is my substance; I am a wave
> In the river of Darkness and Light.
> The Maker of All Things is my Father and Mother,
> Heaven is my bed and earth my cushion,
> The thunder and lightning are my drum and fan . . .
> Wash me and I shall be no whiter,
> Foul me and I shall yet be clean.
> I came not, yet am here;
> Hasten not, yet am swift."
> The voice stopped, there was silence.
> A ghostly light
> Faded and expired . . .

It would have been a bold prophet who, confronted with these lines or with "The Great Summons," by Ch'ü Yüan of the fourth century B.C. (a poem that Mr. Trevelyan does not include in his anthology) ventured to predict the later development of Chinese classical verse. The art and literature of T'ang and Sung, a Western critic may feel, at the period of their most exquisite flowering had already begun to disclose a hint of the weaknesses that would one day undermine them. Every extreme refinement of sensibility must one day overreach itself. The culture that spreads too far will eventually spread too thin; and, even more dreadful for a poet than living in a world where nobody reads or professes to enjoy poetry, is to be the member of a society where everybody writes it. Should the educated classes write and criticise verse as part of their official duties, then the poet's doom is sealed; for nothing is so inimical to the artist's creative gift as a civilisation that, instead of discarding inherited standards of taste (as happened in Europe after the Industrial Revolution), preserves certain vestiges of a traditional sense of style, unsupported by the imaginative vitality that gives taste and a sense of style their true aesthetic value. Such, at different times, has been the predicament of the civilisations built up by Japan and China. Such is the problem that faces modern Chinese poets. The efforts they have made to solve it, and their desperate attempts to reconcile the rival claims of past and present ages, are illustrated in the sheaf of poems, graceful and allusive yet strangely insubstantial, with which the editor of *From the Chinese* has elected to conclude his book.

PETER QUENNELL

NEW NOVELS

Spanish Portrait. By ELIZABETH LAKE. *Pilot Press.* 8s. 6d.

The Trip to London. By RHYS DAVIES. *Heinemann.* 6s.

What Farrar Saw. By JAMES HANLEY. *Nicholson and Watson.* 8s. 6d.

Bitten by the Tarantula. By J. MACLAREN-ROSS. *Wingate.* 7s. 6d.

Dare one hope that among the great war secrets now being divulged, some news will one day come out about what is meant by the Authorised Economy Standards, in complete (and sometimes, one suspects, more than complete) conformity with which almost all English books are now published? Why, for example, is a book like Mr. P. H. Newby's *A Journey to the Interior* as much a pleasure to look at and to handle as it is to read, while to get through a new Stalin Prize Novel, even if experience of its predecessors did not deter one, would demand a magnifying-glass to enlarge the print, and a ruler to separate the lines? The size of the publishing house clearly has nothing to do with it all; somewhere, ethics on the one hand, and money-grubbing on the other, appear to be involved. Here are four new books, three by known writers. Mr. Hanley's book has a dust-jacket with a picture on it of a ship in a bottle; the story is not concern d with the sea, and one can only regard the jacket as a subtle piece of satire directed against Mr. Hanley's other works. The book is bound in a material better suited to little girls' toy hand-bags; its print, though large, is ugly, and its enormous quotation-marks (the book is almost wholly in dialogue) are very trying to the eyes. Mr. Davies's new collection of stories is not conspicuously ill-bound or ill-printed, but its contents page is put on the back of the title-page, and the stories run on one from another, even though the extra paper needed to begin each on a new page would be very small. Mr. Maclaren-Ross's book is very well bound and generously, though not elegantly, printed; but its last three pages increase their number of lines from thirty-four per page to forty-one, thereby giving a peculiar *stretto* effect to the narrative, which is, in fact, its sole interest.

Now these three writers are sufficiently well known for their readers to buy or to reject them on the strength of their past performances; but consider the sad plight of Miss Elizabeth Lake, whose first novel, an intelligent and even brilliant book, is disguised by an idiotic dust-jacket that makes it look like a cheap novelette, and by a type that gives a faintly dubious impression which the book nowhere substantiates. Its title-page is visible through its end-papers, and the author's name on the spine is ignominiously reduced to E. Lake. And behind all this lies a surprisingly good novel.

It may be said at once that *Spanish Portrait* is reminiscent in manner of Mr. Christopher Isherwood; but it is a tribute to Mr. Isherwood's talents that one can relish in another writer a similar lucidity and humour, and a similar power of sympathetically depicting a foreign society on the verge of disintegration. No young author need be ashamed to learn from him, least of all one who has an original story to tell. For Miss Lake's theme—her book is a full-length story of a single difficult personal relationship—is not of a kind which one can so far imagine Mr. Isherwood attempting. Her heroine is an English girl who pays long visits to Spain in the years immediately preceding the Civil War. She falls in love with a Spanish painter of limited powers; he is in love with her also. But the divergent sexual traditions of the two countries present an insuperable barrier. She has had previous lovers; the young painter has prostitutes; and there is no external family interference. There stands the champagne, but they taste it not. I have read no better account since *Where Angels Fear to Tread* of the psychological barriers between loving members of different races. Miss Lake convinces one of the reality of these barriers, though she sets herself the difficult task of presenting her study from the angle of the girl, whose perceptions are less acute than those of the Spaniard; her picture of the man becomes therefore doubly subtle. The dialogue is a delight, the background, in all its variety, admirably done; the end, with its solitary painful shock, is very fine. In every way, *Spanish Portrait* is a most satisfying novel.

Mr. Rhys Davies is so completely a master of the short story that one has little to say of him, except to express wonder at his sustained *vis comica*, his superb gift of complete characterisation in the smallest conceivable space, and his consistently felicitous inventiveness. When he abandons comedy, he is often equally impressive: in his new book there is a story called *The Public-House*, about a child's first contact with adult lustfulness, which is well enough done to bear comparison with Joyce's terrifying story *An Encounter*, which has a similar theme. I think it is merely the juxtaposition, within a single volume, of disparate scenes—Wales and England—that gives one an occasional doubt about the success of Mr. Davies's non-Welsh stories. The long *Orestes*, in the present collection, has remarkable power, though its parallels with the fall of the house of Atreus seem, for all their cunning, to be a little over-sought. It is greatly to Mr. Davies's credit that even when the opening of one of his tales—*The Last Struggle* is a present example—leads us immediately to conjecture its middle or end, the excellence and originality of his writing persuade us to go on; and he never fails to reward us.

What Farrar Saw is a novel about a gigantic traffic-jam in 1948. About a hundred thousand motor-cars get stuck three abreast on a road to the North, soon after petrol restriction ceases; and we see various small cargoes of people hunting for food and drink in a sparsely populated countryside. We see, as well, the reactions of the country-folk and of Whitehall. As a theme it is neither good nor bad; everything depends on its treatment, and Mr. Hanley treats it rather dully. How amusingly, I couldn't help feeling, the early H. G. Wells would have peopled such a book. And its point seems to me rather obscure; is it a plea for the retaining of controls, or merely for wider roads? For surely Mr. Hanley would not lower himself to issue yet another allegorical warning about the dangers of the Machine.

The point of Mr. Maclaren-Ross's novel is not obscure. It has none. It is a rapid little narrative, of sub-Hemingway type, about a collection of odd people in a French mountain chalet: a variation on *The Constant Nymph*, only without the nymph. The author often seems not to know what to do with his characters, beyond making them urinate, defecate and copulate; but this, one hopes, affords a certain satisfaction to readers who cannot manage these things in real life. One of the characters spends much of his time reading Mr. Evelyn Waugh's *Vile Bodies*. I wished throughout that I was doing the same.

HENRY REED

UNINTELLIGIBILITY, OR TRUMPETS?

Deaths and Entrances. Poems, by DYLAN THOMAS. *Dent.* 3s. 6d.

Mr. X, a critic, with whom happily I am on the worst of terms, once slammed up to me in a restaurant and thrust his fingers under my nose saying, "Now what do you make of that?" *That*—instead of the piece of veal escalope I'd intended—was a little notebook, on the first page of which some lines had been copied from a poem of Dylan Thomas. I shrugged my shoulders. "What does it *mean?*" he demanded loudly, at the same time plumping himself down. The diners turned their heads and nodded as though to say, That's X. Pause. "There you are," went on X angrily, "it's no use trying to pretend, you just don't know!" "Suppose I don't: what then?" "What then!—why, merely that this is the kind of stuff you're always passing off as poetry. I won't stand it!" "You don't like Thomas, then?" "Of course I don't; who in their senses would?" "But you do like Rimbaud—at least you're fond of quoting him. I could copy you out passages quite as unintelligible from Rimbaud if you like. Or from Shakespeare . . ." He bounced back—"But this isn't simply unintelligible; it doesn't only *not* make sense, it can't possibly, conceivably mean anything, even to the author!" "How can you be sure? Wait a few years. And why so angry?" For he was by then fizzing mad, and as he stumped away it came out with a pop—"I don't care a b——what you say! You're wrong, all of you, *and* you know it!!" All of us: that meant, I suppose, the dozen or so of Thomas's friendly reviewers against whom, a lonely champion of sense and order, X had set himself. Thus, one evening early in the war, were the floods of poetic unreason stemmed.

It wasn't till much later, till the other week-end, in fact, as I was packing *Deaths and Entrances* into my bag, that this scene returned to me, together with its explanation: X was enraged because that was the only way left to him of being stirred by the poetry of the last decade. It was his form of tribute. There was the gate (open, though not for him), so he put down his head and charged. He had shown some perspicacity in choosing, from all the long-faced, uncertain prophets of the time, one writer who had fire and vision.

Almost everyone with a literary sense can see to-day that Dylan Thomas is a poet. Whether he can go on to elucidate his poetry is another matter; for that depends finally, I believe, on one's wishes. A reader who set out to understand Blake as though he were Milton, would very soon land himself in difficulties, and those who persist in finding Dylan Thomas "unintelligible" seem to treat him as a sort of demented Shropshire Lad. Why doesn't this poem come spick and span, where exactly does that word or image fit in? Too trim an analysis will always make nonsense of a poetry that jumps at revelations. Dylan Thomas, in this respect, belongs to the Blake category. His meaning is, sometimes, fairly easily reducible to prose terms (and that's the usual standpoint of "What does it mean?"); but more often the real sense is conveyed in quite other ways—by the spark generated between two sets of ideas or images running parallel, by huge displacements of metaphor, by sexual connotations, by a use of words in, as it were, the crystal rather than the fluid form. There are gaps in the line-by-line meaning of almost any Dylan Thomas poem, but at the same time, within range of sight and hearing, far larger reconciliations or contrasts have been taking place. It is true to say of this writer that his poetry as a whole grows and impresses more than do the individual poems; and that once you have received this general imprint every line and phrase is loaded with emphasis. To anyone, for example, who knows his first book of poems, the first line of all must be extraordinarily evocative—

I see the boys of summer in their ruin

—though, by itself, the line is perhaps hardly more than tantalising.

Dylan Thomas has travelled a long distance since that line was written in the early Thirties; from nihilist adolescence to an almost religious maturity, the minor to the major key; spoilt harvests and the child clawing its way back to the womb have vanished before the engulfing experience of sex; and the new nuptials bring with them a whole cosmology of loves, wars, oceans, dream travel, prehistory and legend—an exploration of human desire and fear in journeyings that leads one at times to think of Melville, except that here the poles of birth and death are kept always in sight. The shift, during twelve years, has been from a parched passionate utterance to the sense of glory. Here, for comparison, are the two:

Where once the waters of your face
Spun to my screws, your dry ghost blows
The dead turns up its eye;
Where once the mermen through your ice

Pushed up their hair, the dry wind steers
Through salt and root and roe.
—From *18 Poems* (1934)

Into her lying down head
His enemies entered bed,
Under the encumbered eyelid,
Through the rippled drum of the hair-buried ear;
And Noah's rekindled now unkind dove
Flew man-bearing there.
Last night in a raping wave
Whales unreined from the green grave
In fountains of origin gave up their love,
Along her innocence glided
Juan aflame and savagely young King Lear,
Queen Catherine howling bare
And Samson drowned in his hair,
The colossal intimacies of silent
Once seen strangers or shades on a stair.
—From *Deaths and Entrances*

A striking development, if one sets the earlier book against the later, with the merits of the first already tested by experience. And yet how little, in essence, that poetry has changed!

Deaths and Entrances is not an easy book to read (I will grant Mr. X that), and it's even less easy to review. It makes its impact as a whole, as the new peaks of the writer's poetry; one must quote, yet the choice seems to be between some major passage hopelessly wrenched out of its context, and one of the more immediately pleasing lesser lyrics. I shall prefer the first. Here, from "A Winter's Tale," across a snowy landscape crisply and beautifully evoked and then merged in legend, is the pursuit of the she-bird:

And the wild wings were raised
Above her folded head, and the soft feathered voice
Was flying through the house as though the she bird praised
And all the elements of the slow fall rejoiced
That a man knelt alone in the cup of the vales.

In the mantle and calm,
By the spit and the black pot in the log bright light.
And the sky of birds in the plumed voice charmed
Him up and he ran like a wind after the kindling flight
Past the blind barns and byres of the windless farm.

In the poles of the year
When black birds died like priests in the cloaked hedge row
And over the cloth of counties the far hills rode near,
Under the one leaved trees ran a scarecrow of snow
And fast through the drifts of the thickets antlered like deer,

Rags and prayers down the knee-
Deep hillocks and loud on the numbed lakes,
All night lost and long wading in the wake of the she-
Bird through the times and lands and tribes of the slow flakes.

Listen and look where she sails the goose plucked sea,

The sky, the bird, the bride,
The cloud, the need, the planted stars, the joy beyond
The fields of seed and the time dying flesh astride,
The heavens, the heaven, the grave, the burning font.
In the far ago land the door of his death glided wide,
And the bird descended. . . .

This longish extract—with all the ends, I'm afraid, left dangling—will at least give the reader a glimpse into the profoundly imaginative world of Mr. Thomas's poetry. The narrative has a Hopkins-like form and richness of texture, together with an ecstasy (but more swiftly changing) that may provoke the same comparison: of all English poems, I suspect, only *The Wreck of the Deutschland* has affected Mr. Thomas at all considerably. Not that he imitates or echoes Hopkins, but a similar energy makes it inevitable that their paths should cross.

Three at least of the poems in this volume—*A Winter's Tale*, *Poem in October*, and *The Ballad of the Two-Legged Bait*—must be placed among the outstanding poems written in our time; and there are half a dozen others on a hardly inferior level. If they were remarkable for nothing else, their grandeur would remove them from current trends. Elsewhere Mr. Thomas clings at times to an earlier fault (which incidentally has been much copied by others): that of welding syntax and sense into a verbal palindrome which is self-contained at the expense of excluding the reader. Such passages—among which I should set the title poem ("On almost the incendiary eve, Of deaths and entrances")—are never, in Thomas's case, mere exercises in ingenuity, because of the over-riding energy and meaning that give stress to nearly all he writes. They aren't enough in number to deter the willing reader, but I expect one or two of them to find their way into X's little book.

The appearance, by the by, of *Deaths and Entrances* is peculiarly out of keeping with the contents. One could put up with the spaced type of the few poems in rhombus and hour-glass shapes: that presumably is the responsibility of the author. But the book itself! It measures roughly five by four inches, and there are margins of a half-inch at the sides and a quarter-inch at the top of each page. I doubt if any book of comparable importance has ever been disgraced by so mean and skimpy an attire.

G. W. STONIER

FREEDOM AND EXPERIENCE

God With Us. Three Meditations. By S. L. FRANK. Translation from the Russian by NATALIE DUDDINGTON. *Cape.* 12s. 6d.

The difference between faith and unbelief is not that between two judgments the contents of which are mutually contradictory, but is merely the difference between a wider and narrower outlook. It is not the case of one man seeing white where another sees black: a believer differs from an unbeliever as a man with good eyesight differs from a short-sighted one, or a musical man from an unmusical man. In addition to what they perceive in common, a believer also perceives that which the unbeliever fails to notice and therefore denies; the rest—all that which is seen and affirmed by the unbeliever—may well be recognised by the believer too, but in combination with the other things which he alone perceives it all acquires a different meaning . . .

This statement will sound a little priggish until one grasps how Professor Frank relates his ideas; it then acquires, I think, some important implications.

Faith, dogma, revelation and authority can have no meaning for the individual—except a fraudulent one—unless he feels that they interpret his own experience. The description and interpretation of this experience in words involves many of the difficulties that we meet trying to do the same thing to æsthetic experience. The practical resources of religion, its dogmas and so on, can only summarise or lead towards the full richness of mystical experience. Just as standards develop and educate taste, authority in religion should embody the best experience of the past, for without it as a guide we cannot train our own inner voice. To rely wholly on private intuition leads to the same vulgarity in religion as it does in art. In fact, religious institutions are open to a good deal of the same kind of criticism as an academy of music or art. They have to find a way between romantic heresies and a dry academicism; but since faith follows or accompanies experience, there must be freedom to allow for spontaneous religious development. If God were entirely transcendental, we could know nothing about Him, and we should be hypocrites if we pretended to. Hence the title, *God With Us*. We must have God within us to respond to his manifestations outside of us. The statement, "God exists" may be scientific, it is not religious. The religious experience is of a personal communion. This communion needs both freedom and guidance to develop in depth and intensity—like any other gift.

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This theory of religious experience will not be acceptable either to those who hold that faith can be imposed only by authority or to sceptics who deny the reality of religious experience at all: two types that have more in common than they suppose. But most liberal-minded people will agree that there is no other approach which does not make the relation between Church and State a hostile one. In fact, the social importance of this insistence on experience is considerable. If the sincere believer and the sincere unbeliever have a common respect for honest experience, they will join against those who try to impose their views by force. This means, surely, that a living religion requires political liberalism as much as Agnosticism does, even though it may be (as Christianity is) opposed to liberalism as a dogma about the nature of man. Incidentally, Professor Frank, who has here supplied such first-rate material for a defence of toleration, was himself expelled from the Soviet Union.

I have dealt with this general aspect because it is of interest to all readers; but the greater part of *God With Us* describes the content of the author's own religious experience and the conclusions he draws from it with respect to Christianity and the Church. This is not a book that can be read and understood in a week; those who are in the habit of paying attention to religious experience will, I believe, find it a profound work well worth translating. Professor Frank is a serene mystic with a lucid intelligence and he deals fairly with all levels of life. The biographical sketch states that in his youth he was a Marxist.

ROBERT WALLER

A SAILOR TURNED QUAKER

Adventures by Sea of Edward Coxere. Edited by E. H. W. MEYERSTEIN. *Oxford Press. 7s. 6d.*

I was writing recently on Captain Thomas James' *Strange and Curious Voyage* (London, 1633), and Captain Woodes Rogers' *A Cruising Voyage Round the World* (London, 1712); now appears for the first time Edward Coxere's *A Relation of the Several Adventures By Sea with the Dangers, Difficulties, and Hardships I Met for Several Years: As Also the Deliverances and Escapes through Them for which I Have Cause to Give the Glory to God For Ever*, written between 1685 and 1694 and admirably edited by Mr. E. H. W. Meyerstein.

Famous in their lifetimes, James and Rogers wrote for publication. It is safe to say that Coxere had no thought that his narrative would ever be printed. He was a common sailor who had taken to the sea against the wishes of his parents, who would have made a cooper of him. He writes at one point in the *Relation*: "I, being full of motion at that time, refused little whereby something might be got." But he had been full of motion from the beginning, and so he settled down with no misgivings at all to the common sailor's life of his day, which in his case included serving with the Dutch in the naval wars against the Commonwealth, fighting in English warships against the Spaniards, being captured twice by the Spaniards and once by the Moors of Tunis. Rightly, Mr. Meyerstein stresses the *Relation's* "affinity with the picaresque romances of sea-life that started in 1720 with *Captain Singleton*." What Coxere has to give us is the bare bones of Defoe's fictitious narratives, and he tells his story with forthrightness and humour.

He was a common sailor; but he wasn't quite an ordinary seaman. Three-quarters of the way through his life-story something—the unexpected—happens. "I lay all night there, but in the morning very early I waked as if something had got me hold by the throat to strangle me." He had fallen in with the Quakers and been "persuaded." The whole course of his life was changed, for his conversion "struck at my very life." At the time he was mate of a merchant vessel, and sometimes merchant vessels had to fight. "I being now in this very great strait, leaning on the ship's side by Richard Knowlleman, who had been gunner of a man-of-war, and left his employment on account of fighting, and was counted a Quaker, yet (it seemed) would fight in a merchantman, I asked him that, if we should have occasion to fight, what must be done. His answer was that we might fire at the mast. The Lord," is Coxere's comment, "let me see that piece of deceit." For he was no trimmer; if to be a Quaker meant that he must give up the sea, then he would give up the sea. It didn't come to that; he found Quaker shipowners who would employ him. But it did mean persecution. Once, when his ship put into Yarmouth, he was arrested with others of his company at the Friends' Meeting and kept in prison seven months. Later, he was to spend fifty-one months in Dover jail. So, what begins as a precursor of the picaresque ends as a spiritual autobiography; and, while artlessness and simplicity were probably native to Coxere, one hazards that the serenity and sweetness of temper that pervade the *Relation* derive from his religious experience as a Quaker.

WALTER ALLEN

Horizon—February. 2s.

With his usual art, Mr. Connolly has chosen for his Swiss number February, the month when we most long to escape from our fill-dyke gloom to the incandescence of the Alpine slopes. His introduction is a lovely piece of writing, and almost cruel, so gorgeously does it evoke the desirable life offered by Switzerland. Then come fourteen contributions by Swiss writers. Dr. Hans Schmidt shows how the Confederation has triumphed over differences of race, language, and religion—a miniature exemplar, surely, of what Europe needs to become. There are three other thoughtful articles on "The Swiss predicament." Ramuz and the less widely known Gilliard are well presented; there is an illuminating account of Rousseau by Marcel Raymond and instructive articles on Swiss painting and music. Finally, ecstatic poems by P. L. Matthey and Gustave Roud are printed in French. Altogether the trouble required to produce so stimulating a number has been thoroughly justified. Let us add one fact to the further glory of this most civilised nation: with a population of four millions they gave asylum during the war to over a quarter of a million refugees.

Week-end Competitions

No. 840

Set by Sam Smiles

Usual prizes are offered for the best sonnets celebrating the reopening of the Royal Opera, Covent Garden. Entries by March 12.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 837

Set by W. R.

Six guineas are offered for the best six-line epitaphs on an inanimate object, e.g.: a discarded desk or tall hat.

Report by W. R.

How various the apparatus that can evoke the regretful tear! Among the objects celebrated by competitors were false teeth, a bustle, a church-school, the Rocket locomotive, a 3.7 A.A. gun, a dried egg carton, a guitar, several sorts of Alpine equipment, a ploughshare, a Halma set, a coffin, a moustache, Shakespeare's second-best bed, a school-cap, a diary, an easel, a night-cap, a match, a flask, a cakestand, a putter, a theatre-programme, a Baptist chapel, a tattooed Maori head, the Tory party and a saucepan-scraper.

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ON DR. JOHNSON'S STICK. (*Buried under Fleet Street*)

Here lies the stick that tapped so many posts.
When all the newspapers have gone to press,
Listen! and in the cockshut loneliness
You'll hear a tenuous tapping, as of ghosts.

WILLIAM BLISS

ON A WEDDING DRESS

She is gone, my lovely bride;
Now, with dust-sheet for a shroud,
I, too, patiently abide,
Whatever fate awaits the proud.
In her narrow bed lies she,
While the moth doth ravish me.

STANLEY J. SHARPLESS

This spade and barrow by the fence,
Were Bickers' tools for forty springs.
They used to reach our soul and sense
(More subtly than a poet sings)
The old, heart-breaking eloquence
Of often-handled, voiceless things. F. C. C.

UPON A WATCH

Here lies my watch. Its time is one
With all eternity.
Its hopes of after-life are none
So far as touches me.
In Heaven I should not need it,
In Hell I durst not read it.

R. J. P. HEWISON

ON A FAVOURITE WINEGLASS, SMASHED IN ITS PRIME

Not in the heat of some dear toast destroyed,
But, brushed by careless sleeve, to death you fell:
With memory of what sweet liquors cloyed,
And sweeter lips, these fragments ne'er will tell.
So I'll not mourn, not yet the Fates malign
Who spared you second loves, and post-war wine.

DIABLOTIN

ON A RAZOR-BLADE

No grave for you in land or sea:
Forth from the W.P.B.
Ejected, from the ash-tray, and
The sink (where Mary cut her hand),
Rusting and unsepultured still,
You lie upon my window-sill. L. E. J.

ON A BEARD, CUT OFF IN ACCORDANCE WITH KING'S REGULATIONS

Lie there, you orange-tawny thing,
Cut off by order of a King,
In discipline and loyal devoir;
'Tis not good-bye, but "au revoir"
Until the Resurrection, when
My beard and I shall meet again. L. E. J.

ON A DISCARDED GAS MASK—FELIX OPPORTUNITATE MORTIS

Uncouth and hideous, not like those dear toys
Which Longhi painted and Du Barry wore,
You shared our fierce unconquerable joys,
Where Freedom fought, and hoped, on England's shore,
The gods must love you, that your life should cease,
Before this frustrate, starving, hopeless, Peace.

G. B. HOBSON

ON AN ALARM CLOCK

For forty years my strident rattle
Roused Master to Life's daily battle.
Now he lies at rest, and I
Upon this shelf rust silently.
But he once more his bed must leave,
God, wind me up on Judgment Eve! PHIZ

ON A LAID-UP MOTOR GUNBOAT

Here, puddled in mud and lapped with silence, lies
The evening spirit of a darkened world,
The owner of twelve ordinary hearts, whose eyes
Saw for them where the danger curled;
Who will remember ever, just as we,
Those nights, those wild roses on the sea.

P. R.

ON A COMPETITION ENTRY

Here—not to rise again in type—
Lies, wicker-coffined, what I feel
Was peerless, but was voted tripe
By One from whom is no appeal;
So with a turn in style I mourn
That infant, still beloved, still-born.

PIBWOB

ON A MILITARY TUNIC

Lie here my tunic deeply in this trunk
Among discarded toys and useless junk,
May buckle perish and your buttons rust
And moths make merry in your crumbling dust
Pray that your usefulness and need may cease
Now and for hereafter—Rest in Peace ——.

M. BENNETT

ON AN OLD WHITE SWEATER

Here lies a lovesome rag that clung
About men's necks when it was young,
Or, if discarded for a spell,
Embraced the white-robed Umpire well.
May it grow angel-wings to rise
Out of the dust-bin where it lies.

WILLY TADPOLE

ON A CARPET SWEEPER

The dust of ages in your jaws has blown—
Now swept yourself into the great unknown.

CONSTANCE SEWELL

ON A WORN-OUT TYPEWRITER RIBBON

Poor palimpsest, of coloured life drained dry,
Your lines in pleasant places no more lie.
You lived for letters: they were all your will:
Alas! You did not know that letters kill!
Now, on its way, unchecked by bell or key,
Your sapless length unwinds eternally.

ALLAN M. LAING

ON A LATIN GRAMMAR

Here, on this dusty shelf, you lie,
My KENNEDY, to whom I'd fly
For aid from stern Orbilius' stick.
You taught me *amo, mensa, hic* . . .
Your learning lives: the Sacred Nine
Still love the language you enshrine.

I. C. SAUL

Within this topsy-turvy vault, an attic,
Beneath a shroud of cobwebs, lone and static,
Lies what was once an utter thrill and joy,
Of all the nursery things the finest toy,
Broken in wind, no mane of course,
Sans eyes, sans teeth, the children's hobby-horse.

P. R. LANE

Grey-blue; with one ring braided;
Guinness-stained and slightly faded;
Pilot's wings and one small Gong—
I have worn you overlong!
FOR SALE, on owner's late Release,
Chest 38—No Dealers, please!

J. C. M. PRITCHARD

UPON AN ARMY PAY-BOOK

Lie there, in thy brown sheets, patched though they be,
Holder so long of the chief part of me—
My dates, my sizes, my Brief Notes on Tactics,
My dear dead stripes, cash, will and prophylactics.
Farewell! The minstrels celebrate the sword,
Thou hast my lowlier, not less heartfelt, word.

P. N. FURBANK

ON A RUBBER HOT-WATER BOTTLE

A comfort were you living, but now I count you dead,
And place, with cold misgiving, these words above your head,
No bottle lasts for ever,
And patches stick on never
And ne'er was luke-warm river
A pleasure in a bed! MAUD GILL

ON A DIARY OF YESTERYEAR

Caged under lock and key
Telling of rages,
Rue and felicity,
Youth and the sages—
Oh, there's a part of me,
Lost in those pages! J. R. TILL

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Personal

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Personal—continued

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